

The Dormitories are Burning:

Gender-Neutral Housing and Critical Trans* Politics
in the Contemporary University

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“What would a truly co-educational institution look like? It is exhilarating to envision such a place. It would be a world in which gender and sex do not spill over into every avenue of life...”

-Duke University President Nan Keohane 2002

Preface

As a cis first-year, gender-neutral housing wasn't on my radar until I met Jacob Tobia. I had no idea the influence they would have on my time at Duke when we introduced ourselves in the first day of Introductory Arabic, but Jacob quickly became my closest friend and inspiration. As we moved through our first year, and Jacob navigated their living situation as a genderqueer person in a rigidly sexed housing system, we learned about the work that Campus Council and Duke Student Government were doing to start a small pilot program on Central Campus. Jacob's perpetual belief that we could change something if we just worked hard enough was so refreshing and challenging that when they asked me, in the spring of our first year, if I would help them take on the expansion of gender-neutral housing by creating a new student organization, Duke Students for Gender Neutrality (DSGN), I couldn't say no to the opportunity. Parts of our story from here can be found in Chapter 3, but I will also acknowledge that one of my personal motives for initially taking on the project stemmed from trying to live with Jacob and realizing we weren't allowed. As co-president of DSGN, Director of LGBTQ Policy and Affairs of Duke Student Government, and Outreach Chair of Blue Devils United, I worked on gender-neutral housing throughout my undergraduate years, both at Duke and alongside the efforts of advocates at other schools. Our time at Duke saw the gradual expansion of gender-neutral housing from no program to the current program, which is poised to include options for all classes and all campuses.

After Jacob, I want to thank all of the students who worked alongside us and supported our work: in the early DSGN days, thanks to Alex, Bailey, Lauren, and Lawrence; thanks to Duke Student Government overall, but especially Pete, Esosa, Swain, Zionce, and Stefani; and at

Carolina, thanks to Kevin. Thanks to Round Table for supporting (and living with) us the whole way, and being one of the first sections where gender-neutral housing was allowed on West.

Thanks to the faculty, staff, and administration we worked with, especially Erin Stephens and Jess Evans for advising DSGN; Joe Gonzalez, Larry Moneta, and Stephen Nowicki for putting our ideas into practice, Sue Wasiolek for supporting our work on trans* inclusive health benefits; and Janie Long for being a resource and mentor throughout the process.

I chose to explore gender-neutral housing in this project because, more than anything, this work is truly culmination of my knowledge here as a Public Policy and Women's Studies double major. While Public Policy honed my skills in political application and policy analysis, the Women's Studies Program gave me the frameworks, the theory, and the language to understand gender, sex, and sexuality, as well as the drive and resources to make this work possible.

Thanks to my brilliant advisor Gabriel Rosenberg for taking a chance on me for his first thesis project, guiding my research, and enabling me to navigate the challenges of applying queer theory to activism and policy change. Thanks to Ara Wilson for connecting us and consulting on the project, and thanks to Michael, Margaret, and Rich for contributing edits.

Introduction

On the American college campus, clashes of identity are inevitable. Students come from all over the world, a varied spectrum of political persuasions, religious beliefs, socioeconomic classes, ethnic backgrounds, genders, and countless other identities, all expected to co-exist in dormitory housing, which often involves living in a confined space with complete strangers. While traditional college housing systems organize students along a binary of biological sex, many universities, like Duke University and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC- Chapel Hill), are beginning to address the inadequacies of sexed housing.^a This paper will offer a discussion of the practical problems of sexed housing as well as an ideological critique from a queer theory perspective. Practically, sexed housing often fails to be a comfortable or even safe environment for students who are trans*^b. Ideologically, sexed housing presupposes that all students identify with hetero-normative conceptions of gender, and that all students will have gender identities that fit neatly within the sexed housing categories the college recognizes and enforces, and that biological sex is a stable foundation of difference.

. Queer theory attempts to challenge static conceptions of identity, especially gender identity and

^a Note: Sexed housing refers to the separation of students into roommate pairs, halls, and/or residence buildings on the basis of biological sex. Gender-neutral housing, also known as Gender-Non-Specific Housing refers to the process of allowing students to live with any student of their choice, unrestrained by biological sex or gender identity.

^b I chose to use trans* throughout, (unless quoting a source that uses the terms transgender and/ or genderqueer). The asterisk in trans* references the wildcard search function, which allows you to substitute an asterisk for a letter or word in a web search. Thus in trans* the asterisk can stand in for a variety of words, like person, woman, man, gender, or folks. Colloquially, the term is also understood to include terms that do not start with or include “trans” but may fit under the trans*umbrella, like genderqueer, agender, third gender, and gender fluid. I use the term trans* in hopes of including a wide variety of identities while maintaining brevity. I use the term trans* with knowledge that many people who may find their gender identity often classified under the trans* umbrella, don’t necessarily identify as “trans” themselves. In the words of Jacob Tobia, trans* includes people like themselves, people who identify as “little t trans not big T Trans.”

shift away from fixed labels, towards the recognition that identity itself is performative, perpetually defined and redefined by action. While queer theorists like Judith Butler question the cogency of static gender identities, this does not suggest that defining and defending non-normative gender identities is irrelevant or unimportant. Rather, queer theory calls us to examine the way aggressive heterosexist conceptions of femininity and masculinity structure daily life. In addition to ideological implications, this paper explores the practical application of gender-neutral housing policies through case studies at Duke and UNC- Chapel Hill, and examines gender-neutral housing as a potential practical and ideological improvement over sexed housing.

While I posit a variety of justifications for gender-neutral housing over the course of the work, here it becomes necessary to develop familiarity with the most central of these: why gender-neutral housing is important for basic campus safety and comfort of trans* students. Sexed housing is implemented under the assumption that single-sex living environments are ideal for all students, and that they are the most likely environment to “ensure the safety, comfort, and privacy of students.”¹ While cisgender^c students may be at ease in this seemingly homogenous space, single-sex living communities can cause trans* students to feel out of place, by surrounding them with individuals with whom they may not share a gender identity. Stanford students noted, “For students with non-normative gender expressions... the business of living in a gender-specific environment can be complicated. Living in and with members of a rigidly defined sex can be anxiety-producing; daily activities like bathing and using the bathroom can be discriminating and uncomfortable because they require that students perform as a gender that may be incongruent with their preferred expression.”² In addition to the

^c Cis, or cisgender is used to describe people who mainly identify as the gender they were assigned at birth. Simply put, if someone is cisgender, they are not trans*.

internal discomfort of having to perform a different gender identity, sexed housing can also lead to harassment.

In a recent study by UNC- Chapel Hill that scrutinized “campus climate and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression,” lesbian, gay and bisexual students were “19 times more likely to report having experienced verbal harassment or fearing for their physical safety.” Transgender and genderqueer students reported 38.1% more verbal harassment and fear for their physical safety than people of other gender identities. In addition, students reported that 11.8% of the harassment occurred in residence halls.³ Gender-neutral housing options and bathrooms help ensure that every student, regardless of their gender identity, can access housing and bathroom options where they feel safe and comfortable. In these terms, it’s a pretty simple ask.

In Chapter 1, I present a basic overview of Michel Foucault’s understanding of power, in order to develop the context of gender-neutral housing policy in a broader critical trans* politics through the use of Dean Spade’s *Normal Life*. Spade’s conception of life-chances draws heavily from Foucault’s biopolitics, which examines the way states and institutions shape people into neoliberal subjects—people who fit the needs of the market. By developing “human capital,” which refers to a range of factors like health and education, states and institutions can improve the labor efficiency of their workforce. I relate Foucault’s three modes of power, victim-perpetrator, disciplinary, and population management to gender neutral housing through Spade’s critical trans* analysis, and Judith Butler’s conceptions of normative gender performativity and compulsory heterosexuality. While attempting to change the administration of sex and gender by a higher education institution is most directly, in opposition to population management policies; I posit that a change in housing policy may have broader potential to decrease the incidence of

perpetrator-victim violence and challenge the disciplinary norms that alienate trans* bodies. I also interrogate the potential for gender fluidity and gender queerness to be an asset to the human capital of the neoliberal subject, as produced in part by the institutional administration of gender.

In Chapter 2, I explore the historical precedent of American higher education institutions' power to reinforce and reproduce hierarchical prejudices in its politics of sexed spaces, racial and religious barriers, and codes of gender performance. I draw out the ways in which historical college policies around housing space and exclusion demonstrate ideology that is problematic in similar ways to the current mainstream sexed binary housing, specifically in terms of gender essentialism and punishment of non-normative sexual behavior. More broadly, I explore the stakes the university holds, as a neoliberal institution, in gender and sex. Through this history of the university, I envision the ways in which the university has potential to move beyond its early role as a disciplinary institution, and depart from the norms it has dictated in the past.

In Chapter 3, I posit elements of a comprehensive gender-neutral housing as a possible solution to address harassment of trans* students in university settings, through examples of efforts to reform university policies at Duke and UNC- Chapel Hill. I draw on my personal experience working on the issue at Duke, and alongside UNC-Chapel Hill, in my perspective of these events, and utilize my advocacy experience as an important knowledge base for contextualizing the project.

Chapter 4 offers an overview of the potential for gender-neutral housing to improve the safety and comfort of trans* students in college and the policy's repercussions for classification of gender on campus and in society. Here I reiterate and explicate the implications of gender-

neutral housing in a neoliberal setting as a population control method, and explore the potential for gender fluidity to be co-opted for neoliberal ends.

On Methods

In addition to publically available information about Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill, I come at the issue of gender-neutral housing from my experience in these spaces. By deliberately exploring cases that I am engaged with, committed to, and implicated in, I offer a perspective shaped by the knowledge production of my own activism. Especially given the relative newness of gender-neutral housing proposals at high profile colleges like Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill, I see this position as a valuable asset in explicating and analyzing what is at stake.

Chapter 1 Trans* Politics and the College Campus in a Neoliberal Context

Foucauldian Framework of Power

In order to more fully address the critical trans* politics framework developed by lawyer, professor, and activist Dean Spade, and draw out the way his work relates to gender-neutral housing, as a trans* inclusive policy, it is useful to turn back to Michel Foucault's work on the evolution of mechanisms of power, starting with state level mechanisms. Foucault starts his analysis with sovereign power, which focused on administering death through the threat of death, and then explains the shift towards government administration of life through disciplinary and regulatory mechanisms.⁴ The older model, sovereign power, refers to the right that a sovereign has to expose their subjects to death, such as by sending them to war. In short, the sovereign's only power over life was to deduct it, to take it away.⁵

As Western European states became more concrete the demands on sovereigns shifted from primarily defending their territory to ensuring economic stability-- with the rise of capitalism, nations needed to increase their productivity. Here we see the rise of neoliberalism— instead of preparing markets for individuals, neoliberalism seeks to prepare individuals for markets. Whereas earlier economic theories failed to capture the complexity of labor by reducing it to a static variable,⁶ Foucault's Theory of Human Capital sees wages as income on a laborer's capital. This capital then includes their health, skill, and their ability to do their job, instead of thinking of wages simply as the selling price for work. If we think about capital this way, it is inextricable from the worker. The workers skill cannot be separated from the worker. Thus, in neoliberalism, workers are both their own capital and the production of their own capital.⁷

Given this conception of human capital, our understanding of the operation of labor is more nuanced—labor can no longer be reduced to a number or a commodity. Instead, human capital is made up of a range of different things, like health, education, and genetics, that all impact an individual's human capital, and thus human capital can be improved, developed, and formed.⁸ With this basis, economic decisions are no longer just about investing in physical or monetary capital, but also in human capital through social, cultural, and educational programs, methods, and institutions.⁹ All of these decisions and processes are biopolitical, meaning they influence the human capital, political status, and power of individuals and populations-- they shape who is capable, who is valued, and who survives.

In order to increase productivity, sovereigns and states had to adjust from the previous model of threatening death, and instead find strategies to encourage human potential. For Foucault, the first to develop was the disciplinary mechanism, which centers on the body as a machine to be disciplined, optimized, and trained. Disciplinary institutions included schools and military. The second was regulatory control, which focused on biological processes, and the biopolitics of population.¹⁰ In this new model, the highest expression of power is not a death threat, but rather an investment in and management of the conditions of an individual's life.

In order to relate this framework to contemporary housing policies in higher education, it is useful to turn to Dean Spade's trans* politics analysis in *Normal Life*, in which he applies Foucauldian principles to explicate the political situation of trans* people.

Power, Housing and Critical Trans* Politics

Spade critiques the current trajectory of trans* politics as loosely aligned with mainstream lesbian and gay organizations in pursuit of anti-discrimination and anti-hate crime

laws, and seeks to develop a distinct framework for understanding the political pursuit of rights for trans* people.¹¹ Spade believes that legal reform such as hate crime laws and marriage equality could be one part of a trans* movement but should not be a priority: while marriage equality and anti-hate crime laws may benefit some people who identify as LGBTQ^d, Spade believes they will not produce the deep transformative change necessary to improve the quality and length of trans* lives.¹²

Spade argues that anti-discrimination laws and anti-hate crime laws fundamentally misunderstand the way power operates— this type of legal reform seeks to target bad outcomes instead of addressing the economic, social, and administrative processes that inform the broader context of transphobia, or the daily obstacles trans* people face that are not the result of intentional individualized physical violence. This type of legal reform views the power structures that disadvantage trans* people as top-down, as something that a law can or will fix.¹³ Spade explains that he ascribes to a more Foucauldian view: he talks about the affects of power as “subjection” not “oppression,” pointing out that oppression gives the impression that power is in one place, while he can use subjection to describe the vast complexities of systems that inform the way we see meaning in each other and ourselves through categories.¹⁴

Spade discusses three modes of power operation and what each of them has to offer Trans* politics: perpetrator-victim, disciplinary, and population management. The first is perpetrator-victim power, which, as seen above, is about incidents of discrimination and violence-- the kind of power addressed by anti-hate crime legislation.¹⁵ Spade argues that

^d As in my discussion of the use of the term trans*, I use LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) here and elsewhere because of its cultural position as the current preferred term, and recognize that the acronym fails to represent many vital facets of sexual and gender diversity, and is considered unsatisfactory by many communities. My personal preference lies with the more fringe term QUILTBAG (Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Lesbian, Transgender/Transsexual, Bisexual, Allied/Asexual/Agender, Gay/Genderqueer), due to its broader inclusivity and pronounceability.

addressing perpetrator-victim power can be part of important changes, but an overreliance on these strategies can perpetuate harmful systems— anti-hate crime legislation invests in the criminal justice system, which historically exerts disproportionate control over queer people and people of color.

The second is disciplinary power, which is focused on how ideology produces archetypes of people and enforces norms for these respective types. In Foucault, disciplinary power is focused on the physical bodies of individuals and enforces norms about how their bodies move in the world. Disciplinary power creates the categories of man and woman as material realities, then sexes and genders the body. In Spade, the same disciplinary power that teaches men to be manly and women to be womanly also teaches us the meaning of terms like “criminal”, “terrorist,” and “welfare mother.” It applies labels to type us, enforce hierarchies, and shame those who deviate from their established types. Challenges to disciplinary power oppose the restrictions of behavioral norms and categories and seek to find ways of being outside established categories.¹⁶

Lastly, Spade talks about population management policies, those undertaken to define and protect national identities and interests. In Foucault, these are the regulatory controls that influence bodies on a broad scale. Foucault speaks about regulatory policies of state violence as mostly centered on race, while Spade points out a wider range of strategies that the state uses to separate out demographic groups in order to define whose interests the nation will protect, and whose it will violate. Examples of this kind of policy include immigration laws, administrative gender and sex classification, domestic surveillance, data collection, and the criminal justice system. These systems formulate and enforce distinctions between populations that are a part of the national body and those that are outsiders and thus, threats.¹⁷ Spade sees potential for critical

trans* politics to enact transformative progress in systems of population management, but cautions that legal inclusion efforts can serve to further legitimize oppressive systems instead of fundamentally changing them as seen in perpetrator-victim power. Investing enforcement of legal punishments by the criminal justice system is problematic because of the history of the criminal justice system's violence against queer bodies and queer bodies of color. Similar arguments around marriage equality efforts point to the history of marriage rites as contributing to the control and regulation of women.¹⁸ While legal inclusion may be symbolically important, and may improve the life chances for some populations, one must consider the role of legal systems in the history of heterosexist, racist, and patriarchal violence.

With that theoretical background, Spade moves to discuss practical solutions in three areas where gender administration leaves trans* people at severe disadvantage: identity documents, sex segregated facilities and access to healthcare. Spade points out that misclassification in sex-segregated services and institutions subjects trans* people to increased vulnerability to violence, and sees sex-segregation as primarily a “mechanism of management and control.”¹⁹

In the college housing system, we can see all three operations of power at work, with the perpetrator-victim mode expressed in incidents of harassment and violence on campus, the disciplinary mode evident in social norms and hierarchies, and population management in the policies that determine who is admitted and where are they allowed to live. Spades relation of these power structures to trans* specific advocacy helps us understand where to focus when seeking to improve college policies. While attempting to challenge the primacy of sex as the fundamental residential category is, most directly, a challenge to population management policies; I hope to explore and demonstrate how, a change in housing policy may have potential

to imbalance the subjection of trans* people to perpetrator-victim violence and cause the reevaluation of the disciplinary norms that cause harm to trans* people on a broader scale, even if this only initially happens in designated gender-neutral spaces.

In a specifically gender based application of disciplinary power, Judith Butler notes in *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory*, “gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, it is real only to the extent that it is performed” and “performing ones gender ‘wrong’ initiates a set of punishments.”²⁰ The social pressures on men and women to perform their gender roles in college, had huge power in early days of the co-ed campus, especially as these roles were codified and broadcast as national symbols of American youth. In the next section we see how the population management strategies were used to navigate sex and gender on campus, and how these policies set up and empowered this gender normative behavior.

Colleges, Paternalism, and Compulsory Heterosexuality

While the explicit purpose of sexed housing today is theoretically to “ensure the safety, comfort, and privacy of students in the dorms,” it began as an explicit effort to reduce sexual interaction among dorm members.²¹ The stated purpose may work for heterosexual cisgender students, but sexed housing clearly does not adequately protect the “safety, comfort, and privacy” of trans* individuals, who may face harassment and ostracism in their dorm communities.

In *Imitation and Gender Insubordination*, Judith Butler discusses the structure in which heterosexuality is set up as “the original, the true, the authentic.”²² While she traces the claim back to simple reproductive capacities, she argues that heterosexuality still cannot ever claim to be the true original: “gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original...

heterosexuality is... an imitation that sets itself up as the origin and the ground of all imitations.” The only way heterosexuality is defined as normal is due to the contrast it gives to behaviors and relationships that do not fall within its bounds. “If it were not for the notion of the homosexual as the copy,” Butler writes, “there would be no construct of heterosexuality.”²³ Even though, according to Butler, dominant heterosexuality and gender are only “social temporalities” and not real models of identity, sexed housing is set up to believe and sustain them as real and restrictive.²⁴ By segregating along a gender binary with no room for non-normative expressions of gender, this system hurts everyone, by “provid[ing] the reassurance that there is an essentialism of gender identity after all.”²⁵ In sexed housing, “compulsory heterosexuality is reproduced and concealed through the cultivation of bodies into discrete sexes with ‘natural’ appearances and ‘natural’ heterosexual dispositions.” Like racialization in Foucault’s biopolitics, the heterosexual matrix serves to sort populations in Butler, and distribute life-chances in Spade.

The continued enforcement of a system set up to prevent sexual behavior while enforcing heterosexist norms is troubling from an ideological standpoint. First, the use of a gender specific housing policy as a way to prevent sexual activity treats sexual activity as deviant, and undermines students’ judgment and autonomy. The idea that an academic institution should institute policies that attempt to prevent sexual activity between consenting adults feels intrusive and at least out of touch with the sexual norms of today’s college students, although these policies are often important in appealing to prospective parents. Second, the idea that a simple separation of sexes, by hall, floor, or building will actually prevent any sexual activity from happening is ludicrous, as seen in the increased sexual activity in the early day of the co-ed campus, despite harshly sexed rules and curfews. In addition, the use of sexed housing to

prevent or decrease sex demonstrates an institutional disregard of non-heterosexual sexual interaction. This model makes the assumption that the only sex students are having is between a cis-male and a cis-female.

When students are segregated by sex in a housing system, an implied set of values and assumptions is put into play. Exclusively gender segregated housing values same-sex friendships as implicitly more legitimate than friendships across sexed lines and imposes the hetero-normative judgment that friendships between women and men must necessarily be sexual in nature. These assumptions and norms hinder effective gender relations and institutionalize problematic views of gender relations on a structural level. Duke Students for Gender Neutrality (DSGN) argues this point in our proposal for broader gender-neutral housing options, “gender-segregated housing perpetuates a culture of unhealthy gender relations... and encourages the negative effects of such a culture—chief among them being gender based violence and assault, homophobia and transphobia.”²⁶

Gender-neutral Housing as a Solution

The traditional system of assumed heterosexuality and sexed housing is flawed, and this is where the true potential of gender-neutral housing comes in. When comprehensively implemented, gender-neutral housing defies the binaries of traditional sexed housing and deemphasizes gender identity as a criterion for living space and cultural participation. Gender-neutral housing opens up the possibility of relationships, discussions, and space that is not dominated by one gender or one conception of what ‘gender’ means. In addition to changing the gender dynamic of housing space, gender-neutral housing provides increased options to trans* students without requiring them to come out publicly, or marking them as abnormal housing

cases that must be ‘accommodated.’ At the very least, gender-neutral housing makes residential university spaces safer for trans* people.

Gender-neutral Housing and the Neoliberal Subject

The university has operated, especially since the 1980s, as an institution focused on the development and refinement of human capital for neoliberal markets. The relationship of gender-neutral housing to the university’s historical production of neoliberal subjects for the workplace is nuanced. On one hand gender-neutral housing can be seen as a broadening of gender categories for a system that continues to regulate gender. For Spade and Butler, I believe this is a partial win— while the university maintains its interest in being able to administrate gender, the categories they administrate are no longer binary, and the previous power of designated at birth sex as a gender determinant and as residential determinant is diminished.

That said, the university continues to operate as an institution which serves capitalist aims in many ways, including the production of neoliberal subjects for the market. Gender-neutral housing invests in university housing systems, and as such universities—which are exclusionary spaces that can be seen as broadly perpetuating socioeconomic, racial, gender-based, and ability-based inequality. To this end, it is possible an embrace of trans* subjects might be amenable to capitalist aims-- that gender fluidity may increase one’s human capital as an adaptable subject.

In the current landscape, this may be difficult to imagine—how could a trans* identity be beneficial to and desirable within a widely transphobic neoliberal capitalist system? One anecdote comes from CT Whitley, a trans* man working in a corporate setting. Whitley describes himself as a gender outlaw, accustomed to finding his own way amidst all sorts of gendered expectations and boundaries. Because of his personal interrogation of gender, Whitley is able to communicate effectively in different gendered languages and tones. In his words, “my

female past and male present provided valuable reference points for negotiating interactions with both men and women. These days I rarely notice when I switch communication styles, sometimes even among difference participants within a single conversation.”²⁷ Because of Whitley’s understanding of gendered languages, he is an exceptional communicator in his office. Because of his experiences as a trans* person, Whitley is uniquely skilled in navigating the myriad of differences in traditional male and female gender performances. In his office, these gendered languages were a near constant cause of miscommunication—traditionally presenting men and women come from different gendered experiences without the awareness necessary to confront and interrogate these differences. Men and women who embrace societal conceptions of their distinct genders may encounter barriers to success in working together in the same sphere. As gender and sex cease to be a primary determinant of an individual’s human capital, these gender constraints become inefficient—these differentiations are no longer economically profitable when men and women begin to fill the same roles in a market. Since Whitley was the only person in his office equipped to see and address these gendered miscommunications, he and his company benefitted from his trans* experience. “I used my multi-gendered experience to challenge and manipulate the paradigm rather than reinforce it,” Whitley recounts, “I was able to improve my office environment as well as to propel my career.”²⁸

Whitley’s case demonstrates the potential for trans* identity to serve neoliberal aims, but a world in which all trans* people are able to access some neoliberal profitability and desirability of their trans* experience is far off. Broadly, Spades analysis of trans* identity and life chances hold true—because the trans* subject is harder to categorize under current administrative systems and harder to fit into the state and institutional regulation of biological processes like reproduction, trans* people continue to be exposed to gender-based violence and oppression.

In the broader context of trans* politics, an examination of higher education housing policy is a deeply privileged undertaking, and cannot hope to do more than address housing inequalities in college. However, the examination of the failures of sexed housing could be extremely beneficial to the students who occupy higher education spaces, and useful as a model for understanding the practical and ideological problems with institutional structures based on a gender binary. In addition, the evolution of the co-ed college depicts the way institutional and social policing of gender informs part of a national conscious of youth culture and gender norms, and as such gender-neutral housing has the potential to challenge disciplinary power norms that are involved in the social, physical, and administrative oppression of trans* people.

Chapter 2

History of the American College

In order to contextualize current college policy, I look at historical college transitions since the 1880s. These historical cases can provide a foundation for understanding the institution of the historically white, co-ed, American college today, and a model for looking at the operation of modes of power in culture and policy shifts over time, especially around the role of higher education in administering sex and gender.

Early College Life

Before the late 1800s, colleges were limited to those seeking to be ministers and upper class men seeking knowledge, not out of career necessity, but rather simply for the sake of having an elite education. As the United States industrialized, college educations became necessary for career development in a variety of fields as a prerequisite to graduate programs, in addition to serving as a perpetuation of class norms for the already well off and a way for students from poorer families to attain middle or upper class status.²⁹ The precursors of many major public university systems arrived in 1862 with the Morrill Act, which allotted federal land and resources to states to build more public universities.³⁰ Alongside this growth in campuses, the number of Americans attending college increased sharply at the start of the 20th century: including the first female college students who arrived in the late 1800s, twenty percent of Americans between 18 and 21 were attending college in 1930, up from just four percent in 1900.³¹

Women come to Campus

As co-ed schools became more common, universities and students had to learn to navigate the administrative, social, and academic changes that women brought to campus. Coinciding with the 1920s rise of mass culture, the college co-ed came to represent the iconic

American youth, despite only including a select group of mostly white Protestants from middle or upper class families, and strictly gendered codes of behavior and appearance.³² College life became, especially for members of the emerging male and female Greek communities, primarily about social status, with fraternity life as “the ultimate fulfillment of the college ideal.”³³

In order to gain status, college men sought to proclaim heterosexual exploits and be a part of as many extracurricular activities as possible, especially sports, in hopes of joining a high tier fraternity and after joining, in hopes of increasing the campus prestige of the organization while academic pursuits suffered.³⁴ Women, by contrast, gained popularity and status by treading a fine line between being sexually permissive enough, and being too sexually permissive. Campus sexual norms at this time began to allow young unmarried men and women to spend time alone together and experiment with a range of sexual behaviors short of intercourse, but severely punished those women who were seen as going too far or too fast.³⁵ For women at co-ed institutions, undergraduate life became a place which harshly enforced cultural hierarchies, in which affluent students got into better Greek organizations, and women were punished for being too manly, too prudish, or too sexually experienced.

The combination of the appropriation of the college co-ed as the American ideal, and the need to figure out the gender dynamics of a collegiate space lead, in many ways to stricter definitions of gendered norms, even as young people grew more sexually permissive and independent.³⁶ Nicholas Syrett notes the impact that women coming to campus had on the masculine norms of college men, the most codified of which existed within the fraternity system. Syrett argues that fraternal masculinity, already an enforcement of ideas of manliness, reacted aggressively to the introduction of women to campus, perhaps as an attempt to maintain status, as well as react defensively to the growing understanding in the national conscious of

homosexuality as an identitarian concept.³⁷ As such, women were pushed on many campuses to the margins, excluded from male dominated societies and organizations, or shunted toward home economic classes which focused on preparation for domestic life.³⁸

Colleges eager to attract more women responded to the need to ensure the safety and honor of female students by establishing separate housing facilities and strict paternalistic norms governing female behavior. Colleges unabashedly allowed men to drink openly on campus, wear pants to class, and stay out late while threatening college women with suspension for smoking, drinking, dressing immodestly, or violating curfews.³⁹ Already under strict supervision, colleges encouraged women to report and self-sanction behavior that contradicted the colleges' values, including substance use, manly demeanor, and female relationships that were "too close."⁴⁰

College and Enforcement of White Protestant Privilege

In addition to the enforcement of norms about gender, students whose religious, racial, and ethnic identities failed to meet the college ideal were often denied admission outright or forced to live separately from the white, protestant students. One multiracial student was able to live in Vassar dorms until her roommate hired a private investigator and subsequently outed her to the administration as "not fully white". In 1911 at Cornell, two black students were denied on-campus housing until they promised the administration that they were not "seeking social equality" and that they would remain socially separate from the white students in the dorm.⁴¹

Colleges slowly began admitting Catholic and Jewish students, but often had quotas on the number that could be admitted, and responded sympathetically to students who refused to live with non-protestants-- after one student at Bryn Mawr complained that her roommate was Jewish, the college president vowed "Never again shall we put a Jew and a Christian together" in

a roommate pair.⁴² In contrast, the President of Oberlin College argued in the same time period on behalf of integrated dorms, because he believed that the integration of facilities lead to increased religious and racial tolerance, if not full equality.⁴³

College Life from 1945-1960: Return of the Veterans

By the early forties, the numbers of public and private colleges were roughly equal, as states expanded their options for prospective students and returning veterans who had been promised education by the G.I. Bill of 1944, which offered veterans a variety of benefits, including college tuition.⁴⁴ On a cultural level, the influx of veterans caused college culture to place a new emphasis on traditional marriage and gender following World War II. Pressure on college women to return to the domestic sphere increased as men returned to the workforce en masse. The career women who remained were often associated with high academic achievement, nonconformity, and departure from traditional views about premarital sex and gender roles.⁴⁵ After college, single or married working women saw steep pay differences from the men in their fields. For example, in 1947 the median teacher salary for female college graduates was \$2,610, while the median male college graduate earned \$3,584 in the same position. College educated women made more than other working women, but even their salaries remained far behind their male classmates.⁴⁶ Although they were not as commonly written in to policy as they had in the past, reassertions of traditional gender roles infiltrated college culture and undercut the appeal and earning potential of careers for women in the late 1940s and through the 1950s.

Collegiate Rebellion in the 1960s

As economic growth expanded educational opportunities and career prospects in the 1960s, many students from lower income families arrived on campus for the first time, again

benefitting from the G.I. Bill.⁴⁷ The presence and visibility of campus outsiders and non-Greeks grew steadily as collegiate rebellion threatened the social hierarchies and institutional power that made up university culture. Student protesters seized university buildings, set them on fire, refused to go to class, and soon began to challenge the exclusive hegemony of college culture by joining their efforts with movements off-campus. The growth in student radicalism also affected the faculty at certain schools, who reacted strongly to the increasingly neoliberal use of academia as “factory” of professional citizens and part of capitalist production. Many professors began to bring more critical texts and iconoclasm to the classroom, in addition to seeking a larger role in determining courses.⁴⁸ Campus radicalism expanded its focus and appeal as students sought to establish broader theoretical approaches and the prominence of student political organizations like the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID), later Students for Democratic Society (SDS), and the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC) increased. The emergence of collegiate rebellion interacted with the evolving civil rights movement, increased demands for sexual freedom, and growing discontent with American foreign policy to generate a new culture of youth radicalism.⁴⁹ The late 1960s saw the rise of separatist Black Power on campus, and the racial makeup of college campuses gradually shifted as college administrations began to reduce institutional barriers for black students, but these changes were incremental and fell short of any semblance of true social integration.⁵⁰

Feminists began to address their muted role in the New Left, raising consciousness about aspects of female experience, and while the scope of these discussions was limited, feminists were able to add questions of gender to the broader conversations about race and class. The reach of Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* was mostly limited in this period to suburban and professional women, but in 1965 Casey Hayden and Mary King spoke directly to radical college

women in their call to question the of sex and gender in the New Left. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, college women challenged social convention by embracing sexual freedom and demanding to be seen as equals on campus.⁵¹ At Duke for example, the men's and women's colleges merged in 1972, allowing men and women to take classes together on equal footing.⁵²

The late 1960s and early 1970s also saw the emergence of the first LGBTQ focused student groups on elite campuses, with the formation of the Student Homophile League in 1967 at Columbia, followed by a chapter of the Student Homophile League at Cornell in 1968, and the Duke Gay Alliance in 1972.⁵³ These student groups functioned in the late 1960s and 1970s as community building networks, and discussion groups about the emerging gay liberation movement. The formation of the Duke Gay Alliance saw mixed results in the 1970s at Duke—the organization was allowed to exist, and student newsletters at the time describe a moderately accepting climate, including the presence of openly gay faculty, but there are also accounts of harassment and discrimination by classmates, local establishments, professors and Duke Administration. In addition, it is important to note that the voices of lesbians and people of color were strikingly in these early groups.⁵⁴

Meritocracy and Professionalism 1970s- 2000s

In the early 1970s, the tradition of campus protest sharply declined after violent backlash at Kent State University and Jackson State College, and broader events such as the end of the Vietnam War, the assassination of cultural icons, and economic downturn lead students to value grades and job security,⁵⁵ but the social shifts of the 1960s remained. Colleges no longer subjected female students to curfews and students became more accepting than ever of sex outside marriage and heterosexual cohabitation.⁵⁶ Feminism paved the way for many women to

embrace more sexual freedom, and empowered greater numbers of college women to enter male dominated professions.

The 1980s saw a continuation of the 1970s “grim professionalism,” and campus life did not swing so wildly as it had in the past. Growing conservatism found a national figurehead in the election of Ronald Reagan, and subsequent policy saw government intervention diminish in favor of the free market.⁵⁷ As these reforms began to impact higher education funding, colleges and universities were under more pressure to generate their own revenue sources: marketable research, patents, and corporate sponsorship of projects. These changes, discussed in more detail below, marked the shift toward neoliberalism— universities shifted towards shaping students for and through a market economy. The national shift towards conservatism, along with the emergence of the AIDS, led to a more hostile environment for LGBTQ students. At Duke, in 1983 when the President of the Associated Students of Duke University (ASDU), Bill Bruton, de-chartered the Duke Gay and Lesbian Alliance claiming that the group’s constitution was in conflict with North Carolina’s anti-sodomy statutes since it sought to “provide a social outlet for gay people.” However, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw the emergence and reemergence of LGBTQ student groups on college campuses, and many of these groups embraced campus and local activism around sexual orientation.⁵⁸

In the 1990s and early 2000s saw binge drinking among women skyrocket for the first time, alongside correlated increases in STIs, sexual assault, and drunk driving. One study in the late 1990s saw self-reported stress rates among college women 5 times the rates of college men, and a survey in 2004 found that almost half of college students were at some point too depressed to keep up with their studies.⁵⁹ As colleges began to address the mental health issues on campus, they often instituted paternalistic policies that echoed the surveillance and population control of

early college life. Some colleges began to more strictly enforce drug and alcohol policies while others reinstated restricted visiting hours for female housing, in the name of health and safety.⁶⁰

While these issues dominated conversations about campus culture, the deeper trend toward neoliberalism continued. By the early 2000s, Christopher Newfield argues in *Unmaking the Public University: A Forty Year Assault on the Middle Class*, that the former educational, social, and egalitarian goals of the American university declined as our culture lost the ability to understand the world in noneconomic terms.⁶¹ Instead of program development and recruitment of skilled mentors and educators, college administrators found themselves focusing on funding, development, and marketable research.⁶²

Globalization and the Rise of Academic Capitalism

Even after adjusting for inflation, the cost of an average public university has tripled since 1970. Today it is absurd to expect students to put themselves through school, and graduate debt-free, working minimum wage part-time jobs, like they could 40 years ago. On average, faculty salaries have only increased, a couple percentage points.⁶³ For higher education experts Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades, neoliberalism and globalization are at the root of the massive increase in college costs.

In their theory of academic capitalism, as presented in *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy*, Slaughter and Rhoades argue that colleges and universities underwent an entrepreneurial shift at the start of the 21st century. Slaughter and Rhoades explore the ways in which actors within colleges and universities responded to the rise of a global society. They argue that universities found ways to link higher education to the new economy through partnerships with corporate research and products. In their model, students begin as consumers, investing in a college lifestyle that they believe will bring success, as colleges compete to attain

high aptitude students who are able to take on staggering levels of debt. Once students have chosen a college, they become a part of a captive market, and when they graduate, they are potential donors. The university offers their “brand” and a degree, while students offer their human capital for the universities uses until they graduate. Faculty are incentivized to use their intellectual resources and their student capital to enable corporate research and create new products for the market, even as they are receiving funds from the taxpayers to finance their education and professorship.⁶⁴ Slaughter and Rhodes also discuss the use (or misuse) of undergraduate student capital by universities. In spite of the huge monetary investments students and their parents make to universities, often graduating with massive debt, universities in the neoliberal era are able to exploit the commercial potential of students through marketing that serves the universities interests, and by targeting privileged student populations. Elite universities use their “brand” to sell higher education to students and parents at ever increasing costs, then divert this capital towards high earning fields and corporate research.⁶⁵

Overall, Slaughter and Rhoades find that the academic capitalist knowledge regime is superseding but not completely eliminating former conceptions of higher education as a public good. The costs of Academic Capitalism include the use of public funding to subsidize corporate research through university, the blurring of distinctions between the public and private sector, the exclusionary emphasis on high income candidates for admission, the sharp increase in student debt, and the primacy of the kinds of knowledge that are more directly profitable.⁶⁶

Challenges to Academic Capitalism and the University as a Revolutionary Space

The anthology *Utopian Pedagogy*, edited by Mark Cote, Richard J.F. Day and Greg de Peuter, offers an important counterpoint to *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy*. *Utopian Pedagogy* argues that theories of academic capitalism only tell one side of the story,

where in reality the university continues to maintain tension between critical knowledge and profit-based success and research. While characterizations of colleges and universities as capitalist institutions offer important critiques, they often fail to capture the possibility for encounters between students and teachers to result in increased consciousness and understanding of the relationships between personal experience within political contexts, and the continued resistance in academic circles to strictly profit-based research and education.⁶⁷ Instead of conceptualizing higher education as a product or a good to be assumed by those who do not have it, utopian pedagogy conceptualizes education as a potentially subversive force, through which the individual is empowered to unmask domination and mobilize for liberalization.⁶⁸ Mark Boren sites the continuation of a long history of student protest, now seen in campus resistance to globalization, imperialism, and the corporate university: despite amassing pressure to push students toward collegiate consumerism, Boren believes the university remains an important site for “revolutionary subjectivity.”⁶⁹ Instead of a dwindling opposition, utopian pedagogy is *demand*ed by the universalist, hyper-inclusive logic of neoliberalism. Through utopian pedagogies’ experiments in thinking, we are able to continue to recognize and challenge power structures in the relentless efforts to reduce institutional prejudice.⁷⁰

Historical Lessons

Today only a quarter of college students attend private institutions, with the vast majority attending public institutions, which include research universities, community colleges, and state schools. A third of college students are enrolled in two-year programs, and over a third of college students are only in school part-time. While the majority of college students remain under 24 years old, this majority is shrinking, as older students return to school. In addition, a quickly growing population of students attends school online, and the number of for-profit universities is

in a huge period of growth. In 2014, there is no standard college experience—even if the image of the four year residential experience persists, the reality is much more diverse.⁷¹ Generally, bachelor's degrees continue to nearly double one's yearly income, as compared to high school graduate income levels, as well as increase a variety of quality of life indicators. According to Dan Clawson and Max Page's *The Future of Higher Education*, "College graduates are more likely to stay married, less likely to commit crimes, more likely to vote, less likely to smoke, and more likely to volunteer."⁷² These indicators stand to benefit the graduates directly, but also broader society. However, the access to these four year programs is increasingly limited by ability to pay as college costs and student debt continue to rise astronomically.

The financial support of parents is key in understanding the shifts of college policy over time. As in *Academic Capitalism*, colleges must compete for the capital of students, and their families. In order to attract students with the highest capital, colleges develop a brand, and appeal to students and parents with amenities in housing and recreation in addition to their academic reputation. In many cases residential colleges must seek approval from parents—colleges must assure them that not only will their children have access to academic resources, but also that they will be safe, physically, emotionally, and morally. This trend is most apparent when women begin to attend universities, but echoes are seen in university policy around curfews, alcohol and drug use, provision of psychological services, prominence of religion on campus, and gender in housing. In order to attract the students with the most monetary and human capital, universities must balance the values of students and their parents in all realms of the campus. In short, university policies around gender and sexuality are economically driven, not only by the views of students and prospective students, but also the views of parents and prospective parents.

Overall the institution of the American College has seen the softening of the sharp divides of the race, class, and gender present in its inception over the course of the 20th century. College life today allows for a wider variety of experience, and has ceased to be as cohesively definable as it had been in previous decades. In every decade, we see evidence of universities using population control strategies to navigate sexual, racial, and religious difference on college campuses, and especially in attempts to control the sexual activity of female students. The public expression of these prejudices and markers of difference have decreased over time, and would now be considered deeply offensive if written into formal policy. Officially sanctioned policies that segregate students by race and religion have not survived the test of time, while birth sex continues to be used as the primary residential determinant.

Chapter 3

Gender-Neutral Housing at Duke University and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

In practice, the implementation of gender-neutral housing policies is complicated, and faces many barriers to success. These barriers include parent and alumni reactions, student body support, willingness of university administration, peer institution programs, logistical concerns, legal restrictions on cohabitation, and receipt of state funding. For the purpose of analysis, I describe two case studies of gender-neutral housing—one from Duke University and one from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in order to get at some of the similarities and differences between working on the issue at public and private schools.

North Carolina

Part of the reason I chose to focus on North Carolina is because this is the space I find myself in; these are the narratives I have experienced and shaped. More broadly though, I believe North Carolina's unique political setting provides a useful environment for examining queer-inclusive and trans*-inclusive policy. Today's policymakers face a divided state, and must address the competing demands of metropolitan and rural life, both of which have increasing poverty rates. Inevitably, along these economic and population density divides, there is a political divide as well.^{73e}

Cities like Durham, Chapel Hill, and Asheville are famous for their progressivism. In 2011, Durham Magazine claimed to be the “Best City for Lesbians in the South,” citing events like the N.C. Pride Parade and Festival, LGBTQ organizations like Queer Collective and

^e Over the last century, and especially over the last few decades, North Carolina has undergone massive growth and metropolitanization. North Carolina, which was a largely agrarian and small town state at the turn of the century, now sits at 10th largest state by population, with the booming metropolitan areas of Charlotte, the Triangle, and the quickly expanding Triad.

Southerners on New Ground, and policies like health benefits for partners of city employees and an anti-workplace discrimination alliance.⁷⁴ In a broader expression of North Carolina politics, the Moral Monday Coalition recently held the largest civil rights rally in the South since the Selma to Montgomery march in support of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.⁷⁵ How can a city like Durham exist in a state like North Carolina, which in 2013 became famous for startlingly regressive policies? or in a state with a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman? The answer comes back to demographics. North Carolina remains a swing state, where white rural populations continue to vote Republican, while metro areas and college towns vote Democrat.

I believe this tension makes North Carolina valuable for the study of queer and trans* inclusive policies, because in many ways North Carolina approximates a microcosm of recent trends in American politics, especially state level politics. Despite the median voter's political position as left of center, redistricting means many conservative and Tea Party seats may be difficult to overturn. As in many states, movement on LGBTQ issues here is difficult, and fraught with urban/ rural tension, but not impossible. North Carolina's progressive metropolitan cities provide a rare vision of southern LGBTQ equality in the midst of rural conservatism and religiosity.

The clearest difference between Duke and UNC- Chapel Hill is that between public and private. In the end Duke has the autonomy to make policy without the approval of the North Carolina General Assembly, or the appointed UNC- Board of Governors. For Duke administration, the change was motivated by safety concerns and desires to appear diverse and inclusive, especially as compared to key peer institutions. Duke administrators were not tied to state level stakeholders like UNC- Chapel Hill. It is also important to note the lack of an

organized backlash at Duke, where UNC- Chapel Hill saw opposition letters, vocal advocates of a ban, and a state level bill. Part of the reason for this may be the involvement of state funding, but it also seems apparent that the UNC- Chapel Hill community represents a broader or more vocal spectrum of political ideology. In short, because I was working at a private university, my efforts were not subject to review by any state governing bodies, and because Claybren and Phoenix were working within a public university, their efforts at UNC- Chapel Hill have not yet come to fruition. Working toward trans* inclusive policy in a state like North Carolina requires research, coalition building, grassroots organizing, and persistence in the face of heterosexist narratives, as well as an understanding of the broader factors at play in the political climate of different schools.

Duke University

Duke launched its first co-ed housing policy in 1970, two years before it officially became a co-ed university, by allowing both men and women to live in Wilson Dorm, albeit in single sex suites. This policy change came in response to second wave feminist organizing, and even after the policy was implemented, students continued to host sleep-ins to demand the policy allow opposite sex roommate pairs.⁷⁶ The next 40-odd years saw huge changes in the university, including the integration of women to campus. University administration expanded housing options for women, including coed dormitories, but always stopped short of allowing opposite-sex roommate pairs, and even refused to allow co-ed blocking^f until 2008.

^f Blocking refers the opportunity to sign up for housing in a “block” of rooms with a group of students, it was implemented to allow friend groups to access community living without being a part of an organization with a housing section.

It is unclear whether or not Duke had any specific housing policies for trans* students during this period, but in 2007 Residential Life and Housing Services (RLHS)^g was still utilizing a special accommodations system designed for differently-abled students, under which trans* students had to make case-by-case requests for special accommodation. Reflections on the policy are mixed. Providing trans* students with broader housing options through the special accommodations process allowed housing staff some flexibility in finding the best alternative for students in lieu of any formal policy. However, to gain access to alternative housing options, trans* students had to personally reach out and explain their housing needs to RLHS outside of the regular housing application. Inherent in seeking housing alternatives through the special accommodations process was the requirement for students to out themselves to authority figures, which can be a daunting prospect for many students who may not feel comfortable or safe doing so. In 2012, DSGN argued that the requirement to come forward in this manner and enter into a separate housing agreement sets trans* students apart in a negative way and was “isolating, stigmatizing, and potentially emotionally damaging.”⁷⁷

The failings of this accommodation process were painfully apparent in 2007 when a female transgender student living in a West Campus residence hall and using a women’s restroom became the subject of a media uproar and consequently moved to a different room with a private bathroom. Prior to placing her in the women’s hall, RLHS hosted a discussion where they explained to the other women in the hall that she would be using the same bathroom. Without any major objections, the plan moved forward. Two of the other residents told the Chronicle that they thought the hall meeting was excessive and that RLHS’s concern about a transgender woman using the hall’s female bathrooms was unwarranted.⁷⁸

^g Now Housing Dining and Residential Life (HDRL)

Unfortunately, even though the woman's hall mates were unconcerned, the arrangement elicited backlash from a parent. Lee Chauncey, father of one of the women on the hall said he was "shocked" and "disturbed" that the university would allow this. "I told [Duke Administration] that if I was coming across as concerned I wasn't communicating properly... I was outraged."⁷⁹ Chauncey contacted national media outlets with the story and disclosed information about the student's transition process; specifically that she had not had gender affirmation surgery^h at the time that she moved in.⁸⁰ Although Chauncey stated he "had no problem with transgenders" he continued to complain until the student moved to a different place.⁸¹

Instead of asking the parties uncomfortable with the accommodation to move dorms, RLHS decided to move the student to a different area after she had to face the disapproval and prejudice of other Duke students' parents, and media exposure. All this occurred in the same year that Duke made a commitment to non-discrimination on the basis on the basis of gender identity.⁸²

While the policy was instituted in an attempt to connect resources to individuals that need them, the execution of the policy continued to blatantly 'other-ize' trans* students. In order to get housing options for trans* "accommodation," individuals had to seek out the process and identify themselves in an extremely public way, and even then this woman was forced to move again after being exposed to backlash.⁸³ In this incident, the policy only served to reassert conceptions of an already marginalized population as different.

Campus Reaction to 2007 Incident

^h I use "gender affirmation surgery" as the current preferred term. The process is also known as gender reassignment, sex reassignment, sex affirmation, sex change, sex realignment, and genital reconstruction. More broadly on this incident, please note that while some trans* people may have surgery, and/or undergo hormonal treatment, many trans* people do not.

Overall, the student body reaction to the debacle was sympathetic, and Chronicle coverage of the situation suggested the HDRL look into co-ed blocking (where men and women live on the same hall, but not in the same rooms) and gender-neutral bathrooms.⁸⁴ RLHS reported that they were not, at that time, considering gender-neutral roommate pairs because "there would not be general support in reality for moving in that direction... There would be people who would support it just because, but when it really came down to it, most students would say no."⁸⁵ In January of 2008, RLHS decided to implement co-ed blocking, and add one gender-neutral bathroom to a housing section on West Campus.⁸⁶ Students responded that one gender-neutral bathroom was not enough, but RLHS was reluctant to make any other changes in that housing cycle.⁸⁷ In March 2009, the issue returned with an article by the Duke Chronicle's Editorial Board about failed proposal to add gender-neutral housing options at Yale and a discussion of the prospects for gender-neutral housing at Duke. At that point Dean of Undergraduate Education Steve Nowicki expressed support for the idea of gender-neutral housing on the grounds that students should be able to decide whom they live with, but this statement was tempered with arguments about logistical concerns from RLHS.⁸⁸ In 2010, Duke Student Government and Campus Council voted to support a limited pilot gender-neutral housing program in which housing options would include gender-neutral apartments, but not bedrooms, and co-ed blocking on West Campus.⁸⁹

Gender-Neutral Pilot Program established on Central Campus

RLHS implemented this plan, and in fall of 2011, 14 students chose to live in university sponsored gender-neutral apartments on Central Campus,ⁱ with an additional 8 students living in gender-neutral apartments in a student living community, The Nexus. The program experienced

ⁱ Specifically, 215 and 221 Anderson Street, 1914 Lewis Street and 2015 Yearby Street

a rough start, since RLHS accidentally double booked the Nexus rooms.⁹⁰ The Chronicle also claimed that the policy included two gender-neutral housing sections on West Campus, but DSGN Founder and Co-President Jacob Tobia pointed out in a response that the West Campus options were not gender-neutral (they were co-ed), and that the pilot program failed to be truly gender-neutral without the option of opposite sex roommate pairs.⁹¹ Far from the center of campus life, the gender-neutral section on Central Campus allowed Duke to say they had an inclusive neutral housing program, to say they were working toward better gender relations, when in reality, their version of a gender-neutral house left us unsatisfied.⁹²

Gender-Neutral Expansion to West Campus

However, through the work of DSGN and broader campus pressure, Duke gradually changed its housing regulations. The policy of limiting gender-neutral housing to select Central Campus apartments came under review after we compiled an 84 page proposal, including rationale for the program, logistical suggestions, responses to common concerns, and survey data from the student body.

Our rationale laid out ways in which gender-neutral housing furthered Duke's institutional goals, fit with Duke's history and historical trends, matched the policies of our peer institutions that had already adopted components of gender-neutral housing, provided a safer environment for trans* students and had the potential to improve broader gender relations on campus. The policy proposed that students be able to choose a roommate of any gender in all West Campus and Central Campus houses and housing configurations, including a double bedroom. We wanted every co-ed house to have a gender-neutral bathroom or be adjacent to a house with a gender-neutral bathroom and for students to be able to vote unanimously to change

any other bathroom in their section to be gender-neutral. We also asked that first-year students be able to choose to live on a co-ed hall instead of being automatically assigned to a single-sex hall or floor,^j and that RLHS host community dialogues to discuss the changes and benefits of the program.

In our 2012 proposal, DSGN also addressed several common concerns, many of which were echoed in the UNC- Chapel Hill process. First, especially after the incident in 2007, Duke Administrators were worried about the reaction of parents and alumni to gender-neutral housing. On this point, we demonstrated that our peer institutions had *not* experienced negative backlash to the expansion of gender-neutral housing. For example, John Meese, Yale's Associate Dean for Student Organizations and Physical Resources, said that Yale had received "only a handful of complaints" from alumni, and no complaints from students or parents.⁹³ We also pointed out that Duke does not usually consult parents on a wide variety of issues, including student's choices of careers, majors, abroad programs, or even roommates in the current system. While Duke values parents and their input, disagreements of this sort generally remain between student and their parent. Second, we addressed concerns about Duke's public image. We pointed out that by focusing on the positive impacts of the program, Duke would be able to reaffirm its commitment to the inclusion of trans* people. Third, we discussed concerns about the student reaction to gender-neutral housing by reiterating that under our proposal no one would be placed in a gender-neutral roommate pair unless they opted-in on their housing form, and provided data about student views on gender-neutral housing. Fourth, we discussed issues of cohabitation, and the possibility under gender-neutral housing for opposite-sex couples to live together. Our main

^j We did not, at this time, push for gender-neutral roommate pairs on East Campus (the first-year campus) because Duke Administrators had expressed stronger resistance to gender-neutral roommate pairs for first years. We decided to focus on gaining these options for older students first.

responses to this concern were a) the university does not need to take on the role of policing consensual, non-abusive relationships or decide whether or not a couple should live together b) students regret their housing choices and subsequently switch roommates fairly regularly under the current system, and c) same sex couples could theoretically live together under the current system and the administration has never, to our knowledge, expressed concern about that possibility.^k Fifth, on a related point, we discussed a North Carolina law from 1805 that prohibits cohabitation.¹⁹⁴ The law was found unconstitutional in 2006, when Pender County Judge Benjamin G. Alford argued that it violated the precedent set in *Lawrence v. Texas*,⁹⁵ which established that the government cannot regulate relationships between two consenting adults in the privacy of their own home.⁹⁶ While the ruling technically has only been challenged in Pender County, Jennifer Rudinger, the Current Director of the ACLU of North Carolina and a Duke graduate, points out that Judge Alford also issued an injunction against enforcing the law, which may mean it is not enforceable by any government entity in North Carolina. She argues that Duke, as a private university, could certainly ban cohabitation or allow it without any interference from the statute.⁹⁷

To follow up on concerns about student reactions, we included survey data that shows campus approval of the expansion of gender-neutral housing.⁹⁸ The survey, run by Duke Student Government, showed that 61% of respondents would definitely or probably approve of a more comprehensive opt-in policy which allowed men and women to share rooms, with only 8%

^k That said, we acknowledged that Duke could institute a policy discouraging couples if they wanted to—and we were not opposed to this idea-- but pointed out that opposite-sex couple cohabitation was not a good reason to stop gender-neutral housing, and that same-sex couples could currently live together in a same-sex housing system.

¹ General Statute § 14--184, titled "Fornication and adultery" is listed under the sub heading "Offenses against Public Morality and Decency" and reads "If any man and woman, not being married to each other, shall lewdly and lasciviously associate, bed and cohabit together, they shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor."

definitely opposed to the concept. As far as the actual need for expansion of the program due to demand, 26% of students expressed interested in the possibility of living with a roommate of the “opposite gender” at some point during their time at Duke, which is a much higher number of students than administration previously believed would be interested in this policy.⁹⁹ We also included information on gender-neutral programs at other institution as well as how these institutions handled any alumni or parent backlash. After completing the proposal, we gained endorsements from various campus organizations, including Selective House Council, Duke PanHellenic Association, Duke Inter-fraternity Council, Counseling and Psychological Services, Blue Devils United, Men Acting for Change, Spectrum, The Multi-Cultural Center, the Women’s Center, the Center for LGBT Life,^m and finally Duke Student Government.¹⁰⁰

At this point we were granted the opportunity to present the proposal to the House Model Working Group, who, after almost two months of deliberation, conceded that there was a need for a more comprehensive program than the existing one on central.¹⁰¹ Given this recommendation, administrators met with members of Duke Students for Gender Neutrality several times, and finally agreed to a statement which expressed an intention to extend gender-neutral housing opportunities to certain houses on West Campus in the 2013-2014 academic year.ⁿ¹⁰² The extension to West Campus was practically and symbolically important due to the importance of West Campus to Duke culture, but DSGN was unsatisfied with the restriction of the policy to only certain buildings and the continued refusal to allow gender-neutral housing options for first-year students, who all live on East Campus.

^m Now the Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity

ⁿ Specifically West Campus in houses Kilgo O, P, M, N and Upper Few HH, and Selective houses (formerly “Selective Living Groups”) with three bathrooms to allow for one male, one female, and one gender-neutral bathroom.

Gender-Neutral Housing Expansion to East Campus

In spring 2014, DSGN attained a university commitment to starting a pilot program on East Campus, likely in Wilson dorm—the site of the original co-ed housing project in 1970. Again, Wilson is ideal because of its suite style accommodations, which are logistically easier for HDRL to convert according to need, especially since each suite has its own single bathroom.¹⁰³ Dean for Residential Life Joe Gonzalez said of the expansion, “When this whole transition started, it was always with the premise that it was going to be phased. The plans have always had East in mind, but it was sort of like the last domino. We felt like after what we have experienced so far, we were comfortable knocking over that last domino.”¹⁰⁴ In addition to the expanded gender-neutral living space, and new availability for first year students, the housing process will include more options for identifying gender when applying for housing. Currently, students can choose male, female or transgender. The new application may include more options or a write-in section. This change is a clear disruption of the traditional binary administration of gender in higher education, but raises important questions—the housing process maintains the ability to classify gender, even though Duke has broadened the categories that it is able to administrate.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

In March of 2010, the Editorial Board of the Daily Tar Heel wrote “It is a rare occasion when Duke should be supported. But their students’ efforts to provide gender-neutral rooming are a laudable attempt against antiquated policies.”¹⁰⁵ The article goes into basic justifications for gender-neutral housing, but the author remains concerned about the Fornication and Adultery

statute listed above, concluding “his law must be taken off the books before colleges and universities can really begin considering a change in housing policy.”

Later in March, students at UNC- Chapel Hill proposed the addition of more public gender-neutral bathrooms on campus after UNC- Asheville successfully added gender-neutral bathrooms to their campus. UNC- Asheville made this change by single converting sex designated single bathrooms to gender-neutral bathrooms, which helped them get around any worries about shared bathrooms. Terri Phoenix, director of the LGBTQ Center at UNC- Chapel Hill pointed out at the time that gender-neutral bathrooms could also benefit people with disabilities, by allowing their caretakers to come into the bathroom with them. At that time Phoenix said there were 56 gender-neutral bathrooms on the UNC- Chapel Hill Campus, and 54 single bathrooms with a designated sex. ¹⁰⁶

In the Spring of 2011, then-sophomore Kevin Claybren decided to start forming on gender-neutral housing with Phoenix. Claybren began garnering student support for the project after hearing negative experiences from LGBTQ people about their housing experiences.¹⁰⁷ By March of 2011, the Editorial Board argued again for the benefits of gender-neutral housing, and called upon students to lead the change, again mentioning the activism happening at Duke.¹⁰⁸ In September, a resolution in support of gender -housing narrowly passed the Student Congress.¹⁰⁹ In October the proposal was submitted to Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Winston Crisp and Chancellor Holden Thorp for administrative review, along with 2,500 student signatures. Around this time, Phoenix and Claybren held an information meeting to rally support for the proposal, which Jacob Tobia and I attended. Claybren’s reflections on the meeting were hugely positive- about 100 people attended and the atmosphere of the room was hopeful and empowering. In particular, he remembers “Students were asking questions as if this were already

passed.”¹¹⁰ Jacob and I walked away with similar perceptions, especially after we were given the chance to talk about our work at Duke.

Gender-neutral housing rejected

In November, the proposal was not brought before the Board of Trustees as expected, but students still hoped that Thorp would approve the program. In February 2012, Chancellor Thorp finally rejected the proposal, stating that he needed more time to be ready to move forward with it, specifically mentioning the need to educate off campus stakeholders. Phoenix responded that supporters of the plan were “tremendously disappointed” and posited that “the people who currently feel unsafe will be disappointed as well.” Claybren simply stated his intention to work harder and seek implementation for the 2013-2014 school year.¹¹¹

Second Attempt to Establish Gender-Neutral Housing

By the end of March 2012, the new campaign held a rally in support of the proposal, in the face of burgeoning opposition to the proposal in the Carolina Alumni Review, where three alumni wrote letters denouncing the proposal, and linking it to increased pregnancy rates, underage sex, and immorality. Vice Chancellor Crisp reported receipt of similar comments from other community members, but noted that a lack of understanding about the proposal was contributing to the negative reactions. At this point, Claybren and Phoenix began to reach out to other UNC system schools in hopes of advocating for system wide addition of gender-neutral housing options.¹¹²

In the fall of 2012, Claybren kicked off a 10-week campaign to rally student support for gender-neutral housing, and attempted to get 1,000 students to send statements of support of the proposal to the Board of Trustees, alongside aChange.org petition. Claybren and Phoenix

continued to reach out to other schools at this time, focusing especially on efforts at UNC-Greensboro, UNC-Charlotte, Appalachian State University and UNC-Wilmington.¹¹³

While the campaign looked promising on other campuses, gender-neutral housing continued to face individual opposition at home. Then-first-year Addie McElwee, for example, wrote letter to the editor arguing for the existence of “fundamental differences between men and women,” and the importance of “supporting restraint from sexual involvement, not facilitating it.” McElwee argued that the current systems “acknowledgement that the two genders are different and always will be” was not discriminatory or exclusionary, but instead an important boundary for what is “socially appropriate.”¹¹⁴ Claybren responded with an explanation of the difference between biological sex, gender, and sexual orientation, and stressed the importance of the policy for student safety: “Safety, inclusion and accessibility within housing are all fundamental, not gender, constructions that society affirms.”¹¹⁵

A letter by graduate student Ross Twele argued later in the month that “most students will sign up for neutral housing for one of two reasons: to live with their boyfriend or girlfriend in on-campus housing, or to satisfy their ‘ill intents,’” which he then defined as “sexual predation.” He went on to describe gender-neutral housing as an “invitation” and an “opportunity” for sexual predators.¹¹⁶ Critics of this reasoning would point out that the current data on university housing demonstrates higher incident of harassment and assault among trans* students than students with other gender identities.^o

^o Note: We did not encounter much of this type of narrative around gender-neutral housing at Duke, but there was a similar conversation at Duke in the early 2000s around gender-neutral bathrooms. (See: Megan Carroll, “Co-ed bathrooms remain concern,” *The Chronicle*, October 20, 2002.) Nationally, this rhetoric has been also recently used around legislation seeking to ban trans* people

Gender-neutral housing approved

In November of 2012, it appeared that the support campaign targeting the Board of Trustees had been a success, when the Board approved gender-neutral housing unanimously with the support of Chancellor Thorp. The vote approved a small pilot program, capped at 32 students and limited to suite-style and apartment-style configurations, in order to minimize logistical complications. The last step before implementation was the approval of the Board of Governors.¹¹⁷

However, a broader shift soon complicated the issue: for the first time since the 1800s, the North Carolina Republican Party won control of both houses of the bicameral North Carolina General Assembly and the governorship.¹¹⁸ By April, the North Carolina General Assembly drew up a variety of proposals challenging the autonomy of the UNC-system campuses, including a proposed tuition hike for out-of state students at six campuses, a ban on gender-neutral housing, and a bill focused on allowing political and religious student groups to resolve their own disputes, which the Daily Tar Heel tied to a university investigation of discrimination against a gay student by a religious a cappella group.¹¹⁹ These proposals reflect the sudden conservative shift in state government, and, like the regressive voter identification law passed later in the summer, seemed to target progressive college students.¹²⁰

N.C. Senate Bill 658¹²¹ was proposed by three newly elected state Senators David Curtis, Ben Clarke, and Chad Barefoot. It laid out a ban on any students of different sexes living together on campus unless they were siblings or married. Despite the insistence of Claybren that

from using bathrooms other than those for use by their designated sex at birth. (See Zack Ford, “Focus on the Family Doesn’t Want Transgender People to Use in Delaware,” *ThinkProgress*, June 6, 2013.) For this reason, DSGN discussed these concerns with the staff of the Duke Women’s Center. The Duke Women’s Center did not find this reasoning to be a problem in supporting the proposal, especially in light of the data around harassment of trans* people in university housing.

the program was vital to ensuring student safety and comfort at Carolina, state Senator Curtis dismissed gender-neutral housing as a “frivolous experiment” and a waste of tax dollars.¹²² State Senator Barefoot expressed doubt that “a policy that assigns young men and young women to the same dorm suite and private bathroom” would help achieve “excellence in the classroom.”¹²³ When the ban failed to pass as a bill, Senators submitted the provision as an amendment to the state budget. Claybren expressed frustration with the state legislature’s attempts to override student and administration support for the plan. “We’ve got 2,816 student signatures of support, 55 student organizations endorsed it, the Board of Trustees unanimously endorsed it and the chancellor endorsed it — that’s a lot of overwhelming support.” In response to Senator Curtis’s comments above, Claybren argued, “This isn’t just some social experiment. These are actual student lives that are being voted on.”¹²⁴

UNC system president Tom Ross viewed the legislation as state overreach into the governance of individual school policies, and by late summer 2013, the North Carolina General Assembly turned the issue over to the UNC Board of Governors, which has jurisdiction over policies at all seventeen UNC-system schools.¹²⁵ The Board of Governors banned gender-neutral housing programs in the UNC system that August, just weeks before the pilot program was scheduled to begin, and the timing of the vote meant students were not on campus to protest the change.¹²⁶ The vote occurred at Board’s first meeting since the appointment of sixteen new members by the newly conservative NCGA. Board chair Peter Hans stated “Our board wants every student to be safe and comfortable and included. The Board believes there are more practical ways to achieve those goals than assigning young men and young women to the same dorm rooms and campus suites.”¹²⁷ Tami Fitzgerald of the North Carolina Values Coalition wrote a letter against the program, arguing that LGBT students rarely feel threatened in residence

halls and that the policy would constitute a ‘government stamp of approval... on “shacking up.”’¹²⁸ Fitzgerald believes the ban will be permanent, considering the NCGA opposition to the policy this spring.

Advocates at UNC- Chapel Hill, UNC- Charlotte, and UNC- Asheville expressed disappointment with the policy change, but hope to see the ban overturned in the future. Claybren noted the partisan nature of the decision, stating “Our Board of Governors went in with a political ideology and a plan to strike it down.” Anthony Dondero of UNC- Charlotte worried about the implications of the policy for students, saying “Students have been working on it for a long time, and to see it shot down not by our schools, but by the BOG on a statewide level, is a clear message that we’re not welcome in the UNC system as we are.”¹²⁹

In lieu of the new policy, UNC-system schools will continue to address housing concerns for trans* students through their special accommodations processes. Looking ahead, many students continue to support gender-neutral housing in the UNC-system, and others simply found the state level intervention in University policy unsettling. One idea to make more safe spaces for trans* students on campus is to create a living-learning community (LLC) with an LGBT community focus. In this approach, students still would not be able to live with roommates of different sexes, but the hope is that self-selection into this LLC would create a safer space for the students that need it. Appalachian State University, for example, will have a residential community starting next year with a focus on social justice advertised as being a space for students of any sexual orientation and any gender identity.¹³⁰ Andrew Wood of UNC- Chapel Hill student government hopes that universities will be able to meet the needs of LGBT students in housing, but notes that the Board of Governors is unlikely to reverse their decision in North Carolina’s current political climate.¹³¹

A Note on Backlash and Opposition

As seen in the history of American colleges, universities, legislators, and even community members are much more uncomfortable utilizing discriminatory language and justifications to express their views than they once were. Where early college policies were transparent about hierarchically separating students by gender and race, today's rhetoric revolves instead around logistics, concern for the comfort of students who are not trans*, and funding. Opposition to gender-neutral housing in these cases was often prefaced with, as in the case of the Duke parent, insistence that they have "no problem with transgenders," but opposed the policy on logistical or monetary grounds. In this way, hearkening back to Foucault's terms, we see a tension between the sovereign state and the neo-liberal state. The moral impetus of traditional values around sexuality and gender remains, but the rhetoric of moral decency is, for the most part, no longer politically acceptable. Instead, I saw these parties as co-opting the politically acceptable neoliberal language-- that of economic necessity, in order to express an argument founded on prejudice and fear.

Special Accommodations vs. Structured Alternatives

Both Duke and Carolina started with inclusion policies based on providing special accommodations. Sadly, attempts to make campuses more accepting of trans* students often do not address the real issues that cause discrimination. As college administrations attempt to avoid bad press, placate benefactors, and oversee disgruntled professors and undergrads, broader issues of ideological structure simply fail to reach the agenda. Lori MacIntosh points out that even when schools attempt to become more 'inclusive', they often fall short of actually engaging the origins of discrimination. MacIntosh recalls being asked on countless occasions to lead "anti-homophobia lectures," one-time workshops on "gay and lesbian issues," and other 'Band-Aid'

efforts designed at improving the community, and describes her eventual frustration with the overarching futility of these efforts.¹³² “Too often,” she writes, “explorations of homophobia are an invitation to validate sameness and an opportunity to reify the queer body as the other.”¹³³ Without challenging gender binaries or questioning hetero-normativity, this approach unwittingly further establishes straight hegemony and casts sexual minority identities as fixed minorities, forever marginalized as ‘non-normative’ or ‘different.’ On one hand, especially considering the time and energy it takes to eventually develop a comprehensive, proactive, gender-neutral housing program, and considering the statistically small number of trans* students, the special accommodations systems and “band-aid” policies fill a need at many universities. That said, these systems can be problematic because they often require students to seek out special accommodations to feel comfortable and safe in their roommate pairs. In addition, these systems might pressure a student to come out to administrators and housing representatives when that are not comfortable doing so, and do not know if the university official will be supportive or sympathetic.

For UNC-system schools and other schools who cannot or will not implement a more comprehensive policy, accommodations based systems remain the norm, and several steps can be taken to improve the process outside of full gender-neutral housing. One important step is to ensure that university staff, in this case especially housing staff and university administration have cultural competency training which includes basic information about trans* identities, the vulnerability of trans* populations, and specific need of trans* students to find safety and comfort in housing. Another idea, currently being pursued by Appalachian State University, is to create an opt-in living community with a focus on sexual and gender diversity and ally-ship. While Appalachian, as a UNC-system school cannot set up gender-neutral living pairs, the

creation of a self-selecting safe space community may be a successful intermediary model. In the long term, I worry that these kinds of university-created living communities might operate to limit safe spaces to designated dorms instead of operating to make campus culture safer and/or more gender-neutral as a whole. However, these communities are an admirable step towards creating safer spaces under the UNC-system ban.

Chapter 4

Lessons of Gender-Neutral Housing

In *Normal Life*, Dean Spade distills critical trans* politics in response to perpetrator-victim power, disciplinary power, and population management power. While Spade's book speaks more broadly about American society, his analysis offers helpful insight into the microcosm of housing systems at residential colleges where we witness these different modes of power at work. Perpetrator-victim power is evident in harassment, disciplinary power in the enforcement of gendered in social and spatial norms, and population management power in the policies that determine who can attend, who can be roommates, and where they can live.

One of the most effective arguments for gender-neutral housing to college administrators is about safety—how housing policy can expose trans* people greater risk of violence, which speaks to perpetrator-victim power. Attempting to institute gender-neutral housing also offers challenges to population management policies, since gender-neutral housing seeks to shift, if not defy, the ways bodies are sorted and managed according to birth sex. In addition, we can also hope that changes in the operation of population management will cause a deeper reevaluation of disciplinary norms around gender and sex. On college campuses the consequences of these norms can be seen in harm to trans* people, as well as in gender-based violence perpetrated against women.

For practical advocacy efforts, Spade points to the gender administration of identity documents, sex segregated facilities, and access to healthcare. Gender-neutral housing as discussed here fits Dean Spade's call to challenge sex-segregated spaces, albeit in the privileged context of elite residential universities and colleges. As seen in the data from UNC- Chapel Hill, sex-segregated institutions can subject trans* people to increased vulnerability and violence.

Broader gender-neutral housing programs work to reduce mandatory sex-segregated space by providing options beyond special accommodation.

Gender-neutral housing and the administration of gender

As seen in Chapter 2, the American university has been an important historical force in shaping cultural norms about gender, space, and education. The university took on an early role in administering gender as it sought to appeal to young women and their parents. The housing norms separating young men and women in college were designed in part to avoid risk and scandal but also played a part in enforcing heteronormative assumptions about relationships between men and women. College educations overtly shape student's occupations and economic productivity, but college culture was also often at the center of broader cultural shifts in youth politics and culture, and as such helped shape trends about sex and marriage. When women came to colleges, university policies incorporated and perpetuated gender hierarchies in their administration of gender. This can be seen in policies that restricted women's behavior like curfews as well as campus cultures that pushed women away from certain fields.

In this system gender operates as a sorting mechanism, like the operation of race for Foucault. Traditional gender sorting pushed students toward Butler's compulsory heterosexuality and conformity to patriarchal and capitalist norms. In this view, gender-neutral housing, and the expansion of the male/female binary of gender administration could be a challenge to the college's role as a reinforcement of gender roles for neoliberal ends. However, the university, especially in the Duke example, is only expanding the categories of gender that the college can administer, instead of challenging directly the college's administration of gender. The sex of a student as designated at birth may no longer directly determine their

housing section or gender as listed on a form, but the college still requires that a gender identity be listed, and simply allows more categories.

Even Duke Administration, which was receptive to gender-neutral housing, is not ready to give up the systemic administration of gender—they were willing to expand the categorization of genders, not abolish them. Even with an expansion of these categories, Duke maintains their stake in classifying gender in housing, and still forces trans* people to articulate and confess their genders. Even with a write-in section, this articulation and confession of gender places trans* students into a relationship with Duke's population management strategies of administering gender. While a write-in may seem like a good alternative for queer students, I believe Duke and other schools are unlikely to pursue a write-in section, since they might lose the ability to intelligibly classify the gender of students, which would hinder their ability to assign rooms based on student preference to live with other students of certain genders.

One issue, which Spade does not fully address, is the possibility for changes in gender administration to serve neoliberal goals. For Spade, and for myself, the immediate potential for broader classifications of gender to help trans* people navigate vital support systems and access safer spaces is justification for making these changes. However, like Spade's questioning of hate crime legislation on the basis of its investment in the criminal justice system, it is possible that broadening categories in gender administration systems may invest in neoliberal goals. This example is much more theoretical than Spade's, but important to consider. While widespread daily transphobia certainly constitutes an urgent need for policy changes, policies like gender-neutral housing may not be a revolutionary rejection and challenge to neoliberal forces seen through models perpetrator-victim, disciplinary, and population management models, but simply a shift in how they operate on subjects in their domain. It is possible that expansion of gender

categories within American colleges could serve neoliberal goals if a rejection of binary gender is becoming a desirable trait in neoliberal selection, as seen in Whitley's corporate office.¹³⁴ While the trans* subject is currently harder to categorize under gender administration and reproductive institutions systems, and as such faces barriers to accessing support systems and protection from violence, it is possible that some gender fluidity might increase a neoliberal subject's human capital looking ahead.

That said, I maintain that working toward the creation of gender-neutral space and acceptance of gender-neutral living are admirable goals which have the potential to improve safety and comfort of trans* people. The reduction of gender-based discrimination in higher education housing systems requires that gender-neutral options be available to every student, everywhere, and accepted as the norm. While current and developing programs have vast potential to improve the lives of individual students at their colleges, gender-neutral housing at residential colleges is only one small part of the work that needs to be done to address an oppressively heterosexist culture. However, in these spaces, at these schools, we can begin to glimpse Butler's world, and Nan Keohane's Duke, in which gender identity is no longer a source of prejudice, and norms of gender performance no longer restrain or constrict autonomy.

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Appendix I:
January 2012 Proposal for Gender Neutral Living
Duke Students for Gender Neutrality

Note: The draft reproduced here does not include the appendices or the endorsements of the final January 2012 proposal.

Proposal for Gender-Neutral Living

January 2012

Duke Students for Gender Neutrality

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Introduction

"What would a truly co-educational institution look like? It is exhilarating to envision such a place. It would be a world in which gender and sex do not spill over into every avenue of life. Gender does matter greatly, and we will not bring about a better world unless we recognize that fact and deal with it."

-President Nan Keohane, 2002

Understanding the many ways that gender-neutral housing options will benefit Duke University is as simple as looking to the University's mission. As ratified by the Board of Trustees, the mission of Duke University is "to provide real leadership in the educational world," by promoting "a deep appreciation for the range of human difference and potential" and "an intellectual environment built on a commitment to free and open inquiry." When these goals are taken into account, one can see that providing gender-neutral housing options for students satisfies all three. Through promoting a diverse and alternative living environment, gender-neutral housing helps contribute to an overall academic culture that extends thoughtful and open inquiry beyond the classroom. Through embracing the worldview of students who choose to have deep and meaningful friendships across the lines of gender and through acknowledging the needs of students who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming, gender-neutral housing options express a deep appreciation for human difference. Lastly, while many of our peer institutions have enacted comprehensive gender-neutral housing policies already, we are presented the unique opportunity to lead the educational world forward through creating a gender-neutral housing policy that other universities can aspire to replicate.

Executive Summary

This proposal, which is the result of months of discussions and planning on the part of individuals, groups, and organizations from across the Duke community, serves four distinct yet related purposes, which are separated into the four sections of this proposal:

Section 1: Rationale

This section works to outline the rationale behind gender-neutral housing and restroom options. In summary, the rationale is as follows:

- 1.1** Gender-Neutral housing helps to forward Duke's values as an institution of higher education.
- 1.2** Gender-neutral housing is in keeping with Duke's rich history and is the next step in a historical trend towards greater gender equality on campus.
- 1.3** Peer institutions, such as Stanford, Brown, Harvard, and The University of Pennsylvania have already adopted significant gender-neutral housing policies.
- 1.4** Gender-neutral housing helps create a more nurturing environment for students who identify as transgender or gender-non-conforming.
- 1.5** Gender-neutral housing is an effective way to positively impact and ameliorate gender relations on campus.

Section 2: Policy

The second purpose of this proposal is perhaps the more important component. Section 2 outlines, in specific detail, what a comprehensive gender-neutral housing and restroom program would look like at Duke. In summary, a comprehensive gender-neutral housing program would provide for the following:

- 2.1** Members of the opposite sex are able to share a double bedroom, studio apartment, or any other housing configuration available to the general student body; this includes the ability to live in housing on either West Campus or Central Campus.
- 2.2** In the house model, there are two non-selective houses that are specifically designated to allow gender-neutral roommate pairs and provide at least one gender-neutral

restroom per house: one non-selective house on Central Campus and one non-selective house on West Campus.

- 2.3 The members of each house or SLG are able to decide by a 2/3 majority to allow gender-neutral roommate pairs within their house. SLG's will be able to vote to establish gender-neutral housing starting in spring of 2012, and all other houses will be able to vote to establish gender-neutral housing starting in spring of 2013.
- 2.4 In each House and SLG, students are able to decide unanimously to make their bathrooms gender-neutral. This process is similar in nature to the current process of unlocking bathrooms. SLG's will be able to vote to establish gender-neutral restrooms starting in spring of 2012, and all other houses will be able to vote to establish gender-neutral restrooms starting in spring of 2013.
- 2.5 For all students, a stipulation is added to the housing agreement that discourages students from sharing a room with someone if they are romantically involved.
- 2.6 Students who are housed in gender-neutral housing or houses that permit gender-neutral roommate pairs and request roommate reassignment will be reassigned with the goal of those students remaining in a gender-neutral housing environment.
- 2.7 Room Picks software will be adjusted adequately in order to accommodate the needs presented by gender-neutral housing.
- 2.8 On East Campus, first-years are able to choose to live on a co-ed, mixed gender hall as opposed to the current structure which pairs men's and women's halls, but keeps genders separated. These halls are created to match demand in each first-year dormitory on East Campus. Additionally, first-years can vote unanimously as a hall to establish gender-neutral restrooms on their hall.

Section 3: Common Concerns

In this section, common concerns, questions, and issues concerning gender-neutral housing and restrooms are addressed and openly discussed. This proposal addresses the following common concerns:

- 3.1 Parent/Alumni Reaction to Gender-Neutral Housing
- 3.2 Public Reaction to Gender-Neutral Housing
- 3.3 Student Concerns About Gender-Neutral Housing
- 3.4 Cohabitation and Couples Requesting Housing
- 3.5 Legal Concerns Associated with the Policy
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Section 1:

Rationale Behind Gender-Neutral Living

Note: In this section, and throughout this proposal, housing where people of different sexes are allowed to live together as roommates is referred to as “gender-neutral.” Furthermore, while this proposal recognizes that one’s gender and one’s biological sex are distinct categories, we have used the term “gender-neutral housing” because it is what this kind of housing has historically been called at Duke by both students and HDRL.

1.1 Gender-Neutral Housing Reinforces Duke’s Values

As an institution of higher education, Duke University is committed to fostering creativity, diversity, and originality in all members of the Duke community. To that end, we are inclusive of a vast array of people: people of all nationalities, races, cultures, beliefs, and ideologies. Our diversity is our strength, and only as a diverse institution are we able to grow, progress, and lead.

As outlined in the introduction of this proposal, these commitments are made clear in the University’s mission statement. The mission of Duke University, as ratified by the Board of Trustees, is “to provide real leadership in the educational world,” by promoting “a deep appreciation for the range of human difference and potential” and “an intellectual environment built on a commitment to free and open inquiry.” These three commitments—the commitment to an open intellectual environment, the commitment to appreciating human difference, and the commitment to providing leadership in the educational world—are all reinforced and expanded by gender-neutral housing.

Gender-neutral housing helps contribute to an overall academic culture that extends thoughtful and open inquiry beyond the classroom through creating a diverse living environment that challenges students to critically analyze the role that gender plays in our society. Gender-neutral housing will also help encourage the expansion of diversity pertaining to gender expression. The growth of campus diversity not only expands the personal liberties of historically oppressed groups, it also helps make Duke a more dynamic campus in a broader sense by encouraging students to challenge traditional assumptions and think critically about the origins of structural constraints. In Duke’s marketplace of ideas, gender-neutral housing promotes creative thought and self-expression and has the potential to impact all spheres of student interaction, from activism to academia.

Furthermore, gender-neutral housing expresses a deep appreciation for human difference because it acknowledges the needs of students who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming and embraces the worldview of students who choose to have deep and meaningful friendships across the lines of gender. Lastly, through adopting a comprehensive gender-neutral housing policy that other institutions can aspire to, Duke will be able to lead the educational world.

1.2 Gender-Neutral Housing is in Keeping with Duke's Rich History

In the history of housing policy at Duke, the year 1972 stands out. In this year Duke's housing system underwent an overhaul, as Duke administration made the decision to merge the then-separate men's and women's colleges, and to end gender segregation by campus. While this policy seemed controversial at the time, it is clear that breaking down the gender barriers between West and East Campus was a success. By merging the men's and women's colleges, Duke embraced gender equality and fostered improvement of gender relations on both an intellectual and a personal level. Looking back on this policy choice, we can affirm this decision as one that bettered Duke's campus by breaking down traditional gender norms, challenging the validity of outdated policy distinctions, and encouraging a diverse and creative campus in which our differences are no longer sources of separation but are cause for celebration and inspiration.

On November 10, 2002, the University held a celebration to commemorate the anniversary of the integration of the two colleges. At the celebration, President Nan Keohane gave a historic speech reflecting on the role that gender plays in higher education. In her speech, she challenged the audience to critically rethink their notions of the importance of gender, asking, "What would a truly co-educational institution look like? It is exhilarating to envision such a place. It would be a world in which gender and sex do not spill over into every avenue of life. Gender does matter greatly, and we will not bring about a better world unless we recognize that fact and deal with it."

In accordance with the call that President Keohane issued to the University ten years ago, and in accordance with our history and values as an institution, a comprehensive gender-neutral housing program serves as a natural next step in Duke's pursuit of a truly equal and co-educational learning environment

1.3 Policies of Peer Institutions

Gender-neutral housing on university campuses is not something that is new; many schools have offered gender-neutral housing since the mid 2000's with schools such as Oberlin establishing their program in 2004. Most of our peer institutions--including Harvard, Stanford, Brown, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, UC Berkley, and Cal Tech--currently have some form of gender-neutral housing, and gender-neutral housing policies are being adopted by more colleges and universities across the country every year. Nationwide, there are 66 private universities and 32 public universities that offer some form of gender-neutral housing for students, including Duke University. It is important to note that, due to our pilot program, Duke is currently listed as a school with some form of gender-neutral housing on campus. Within those 98 schools, there are vast disparities between their gender-neutral housing programs in regards to the extent of their programs and the options that their programs provide for students who seek to live in a gender-neutral environment. That being said, when we compare the limited opportunities for gender-neutral housing that Duke currently provides under its pilot program with the vast number of opportunities for gender-neutral housing that some of our peer institutions provide,

Duke still has quite a ways to go in order to have a first-rate program. In order to keep up with our peer institutions and retain a competitive edge, Duke must continue to demonstrate its commitment to diversity and inclusion by expanding its gender-neutral housing program.

For lists of colleges and universities with gender-neutral housing policies as compiled by the National Student GenderBlind Campaign in 2010 and the GLBT Center at UNC-Chapel Hill in 2011, see Appendices A and B respectively.

For further information regarding the specific gender-neutral housing policies of Stanford University, Brown University, and the University of Pennsylvania, see Appendices C, D, and E respectively.

1.4 Providing for Transgender and Gender-Non-Conforming Students

In order to understand the many challenges that are faced by transgender students at Duke, it is helpful for one to look more broadly at some of the basic statistics pertaining to the experience of those who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming. While these statistics are illustrative of the persistent discrimination and bias that transgender and gender non-conforming people are subjected to, it is important to note that the experiences of individuals may or may not support these trends. In 2011, the National Center for Transgender Equality, in partnership with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, published a report entitled “Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey.” The report was the result of surveys taken by 6,450 individuals who identified as transgender or gender non-conforming, and the results are alarming. Those who identified as transgender were four times more likely to have a household income of less than \$10,000 per year compared to the general population. Of those surveyed, 41% had reported attempting suicide, compared with 1.6% of the general population, 15% had dropped out of school due to harassment, bullying, or sexual violence, 26% reported losing their job because of their gender identity, and 19% reported experiencing homelessness at some point in their lives due to their gender identity. It is clear that those who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming are subjected to intense discrimination on a daily basis. To see the executive summary of the report, refer to Appendix F.

But the story doesn’t quite end there; in regards to higher education specifically, transgender and gender non-conforming individuals showed a great degree of resilience. While many left school due to discrimination, respondents in the study were remarkably likely to return to school after they had transitioned or had found a safe and supportive environment in their personal lives. While only 37% of respondents ages 18-24 were in school, as compared to 45% of the general population, respondents between the ages of 25-44 were three times more likely to be in school, with 22% of respondents seeking education in that age range as compared to 7% of the general population. This suggests that transgender and gender non-conforming students oftentimes suffer interruptions in their education at the college level. To see the Education section of the report, refer to Appendix G.

In light of these staggering statistics, Duke cannot simply take a passive role in insuring the

welfare of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals on campus. Transgender students are suffering education disruptions due to the discrimination that they are subjected to, and Duke must take an active role in helping to remove those disruptions from transgender and gender non-conforming students' lives. Given the harsh discrimination transgender and gender non-conforming students receive outside of a university context, Duke has a moral obligation to do everything in its power to proactively insure that these students are afforded a safe, healthy, and supportive undergraduate and graduate experience. Having a comprehensive gender-neutral housing plan is imperative towards providing that kind of experience for transgender and gender non-conforming students, which is why enacting "policies to ensure transgender and gender non-conforming students have access to gender-appropriate housing and facilities," is a top priority identified in the report of the National Center for Transgender Equality.

While Duke currently seeks to ensure that transgender and gender non-conforming students are "accommodated" in the housing process, our current method of addressing the housing needs of transgender and gender non-conforming students is isolating, stigmatizing, and potentially emotionally damaging for the students that are involved in the process. The current standard requires that transgender and gender non-conforming students come forward to the administration, declaring their identity in an extremely public way, and work with an administrator to find some sort of housing solution that meets their needs. This policy neglects two very important realities of transgender experience on campus. First, transgender students must identify as transgender openly to an administrator in order to seek alternative housing options. For many transgender students, the daunting idea of coming out to an administrator in and of itself is enough to stop them from seeking a better housing situation. Secondly, under the current policy transgender students are made non-normative and abnormal; the idea that transgender students must come forward on their own and enter into a separate housing agreement implicitly sets them apart as the "other" and denies them standing in the normal housing process. This is offensive to transgender and gender non-conforming students, and it clearly violates the commitment that Duke made in 2007 to non-discrimination on the basis of gender identity. Nowhere were the alienating effects of our current model more obvious than in 2007, when a male-to-female transgender student living in Craven Quad and using a women's restroom became the subject of a media uproar and consequently chose to move to a room with a private bathroom following the attention.

This proposal establishes a new housing paradigm that is better suited to the needs of students who are transgender or gender non-conforming. Under this proposal, transgender students are not required to seek administrative assistance or "special" housing options in order for them to live in an environment that is safe during their transition; rather, transgender students will be able to sign up for housing as would any other student and, if they so choose, will have the option of being placed in one of two houses that are designated for gender-neutral housing or in a house that has already voted to establish gender-neutral housing and restrooms.

1.5 Building Healthier Gender Relations on Campus

While many members of the Duke community are actively working to improve gender relations on campus, student life at Duke is still impacted by poor gender relations and restrictive gender stereotypes. Indeed, many of the problems and scandals that Duke has experienced as a result of its social culture are in one way or another tied to the expression of gender on campus.

For the past few years, there have consistently been student groups hosting dialogues, analyzing policies, and discussing methods of improving gender relations on campus. Student groups such as the Greek Women's Initiative, the Baldwin Scholars Program, Men Acting for Change, the Women's Collective, and the Gender Task Force are actively working to better gender relations on campus, but they are perhaps overlooking the simplest and most effective way they can shift Duke's problematic and social culture. Historically, these groups have looked to a few specific issues when trying to identify what causes poor gender relations on campus: they look to Greek life, they look to the party culture, they look to larger cultural influences, and they look to the lack of women in positions of leadership. Where they have not looked, however, is to exclusively gender-segregated housing.

Exclusively gender-segregated housing presents a significant barrier to advancing gender equality and fostering healthier gender relations on campus. In order to understand that barrier, we must look to how gender-segregated housing operates on an implicit level. When students are segregated by gender in a housing system, an implied set of values and assumptions is put into play; exclusively gender-segregated housing values same-gender friendships as implicitly more valuable than friendships that span across gendered lines, and it heteronormatively assumes that friendships between men and women necessarily must be sexual in nature. These assumptions and values prohibit gender relations from progressing on campus and institutionalize problematic and unhealthy views of gender relations on a structural level. In this way, gender-segregated housing perpetuates a culture of unhealthy gender relations on Duke's campus and encourages the negative effects of such a culture—chief among them being gender-based violence and assault, homophobia, and transphobia.

Gender-neutral housing can serve as an invaluable tool in changing this culture campus-wide. Through acknowledging friendships that cross gender lines as equal to same-gender friendships, we help students form stronger connections across gender lines and form a deeper and more complex understanding and respect for those of the opposite sex. Furthermore, through acknowledging these friendships as equal, Duke encourages a social culture that is less predicated on gender lines and allows for greater individuality and self-expression. Gender-neutral housing also fights the hypersexualization of friendships between men and women on campus by rejecting the implicit and heteronormative assumption in gender-segregated housing that all relationships between men and women are necessarily sexual in nature.

Through granting equal recognition to friendships between men and women and through combating the hypersexualization of those friendships, we believe that gender-neutral housing will result in a campus culture that reduces the prevalence of gender-based violence such as sexual assault and rape. More importantly, adopting gender-neutral housing policies is a concrete way to address these problems, and it intervenes at a structural level rather than a symbolic or cultural level.

Section 2:

Specifics of a Comprehensive Gender-Neutral Housing Policy

2.1 Gender-Neutral Housing Encompasses All Housing Configurations

While two-bedroom apartments and co-ed suites are certainly options that should be open to students who would like to live in gender-neutral housing, a comprehensive gender-neutral housing program at Duke would necessarily include allowing two students of the opposite sex to share a double-bedroom as roommates.

This is necessary for a comprehensive policy for many reasons. First, limiting gender-neutral housing to units where students will each have their own bedroom essentially limits gender-neutral housing to specific apartments on Central Campus and to suites in K4. This marginalizes students who want to live in gender-neutral housing and prevents the program from being thoroughly incorporated on campus. Additionally, because almost all of West Campus is structured for roommates to share a double bedroom, virtually all of West Campus will be unavailable to students who want gender-neutral housing if gender-neutral housing is limited only to units which have separate bedrooms. This, in turn, will bar students who desire gender-neutral housing from joining co-ed SLG's or houses. Furthermore, continuing to separate students of the opposite gender into different bedrooms rejects male-female friendships as equal to same-sex friendships and contributes to the hypersexualization of male-female friendships. This sacrifices many of the gender-relations benefits that are outlined in Section 1.1.

2.2 One House on Central Campus and One House on West Campus to be Designated as Open to Gender-Neutral Housing

During the first year of the house model, two houses—one on Central Campus and one on West Campus—will be designated as houses that are open to gender-neutral housing. These houses will not be SLG-affiliated; accordingly, they will be open to all students and will not be selective in nature. It is important to designate a house on both Central Campus and West Campus as open to gender-neutral housing options; if only one house is designated on Central or West campus, students who prefer gender-neutral housing will only be able to live on the campus where that house is designated. Limiting students who prefer gender-neutral housing to one campus marginalizes them by denying them the equal chance to live on either campus that other students enjoy. These houses will be guided by the following characteristics:

- **Houses to be Composed of Gender-neutral and Same-sex Roommate Pairs:** The two houses designated as open to gender-neutral housing will be composed of both gender-neutral roommate pairs and same-sex roommate pairs; however, in assigning housing,

rooms in these houses will first be filled with gender-neutral roommate pairs in order to guarantee that every student who requests gender-neutral housing is accommodated. After all students who have requested a roommate of the opposite sex are accommodated, the remainder of the rooms in each of these houses will be filled with same-sex roommate pairs who have indicated on their application for housing that they are comfortable living in a house designated as open to gender-neutral housing.

- **Question Concerning Comfort with Gender-Neutral Housing Added to the Housing Application:** In order to ensure that only students who are comfortable being placed in a house that has been designated as open to gender-neutral housing are placed in such a house, a question that asks something to the effect of “Are you comfortable living in a house designated as open to gender-neutral housing where your neighbors may be living in a mixed-gender roommate pair?” must be added to the application for housing.
- **The Size of Houses Designated for Gender-Neutral Housing:** Houses designated for gender-neutral housing must be sufficiently large to accommodate all present and future demand for gender-neutral housing, as the demand for gender-neutral housing is expected to grow. A comprehensive gender-neutral housing program at Duke will work to guarantee that students who want to live with a friend of the opposite sex will have an equal chance of living on West or Central campus as the rest of the student body. Additionally, a comprehensive program will also work to guarantee that students living with same-sex roommates who indicate that they are comfortable living in a house that is designated as open to gender-neutral housing will have an equal chance of living on West or Central Campus as the rest of the student body. Working to maintain these ratios will impact the size of the two houses that are designated as open to gender-neutral housing. If, for example, 60% of the sophomore class, not including students living in SLG, Fraternity, or Sorority sections, is going to be randomly assigned to West Campus and 40% of the sophomore class is going to be randomly assigned to Central Campus, the West Campus house designated as open to gender-neutral housing should be larger than the Central Campus house in order to approximate the ratios of the randomly assigned sophomore class.
- **Structure and Placement of Central Campus House:** The house designated as open to gender-neutral housing can be placed within any house on Central Campus. While current gender-neutral apartments on Central Campus are specifically limited to two-bedroom doubles and three bedroom suites, the Central Campus house designated as open to gender-neutral housing could be located in a house with any configuration of apartments (refer back to Section 2.1 for more information)
- **Structure and Placement of West Campus House:** On West Campus, the house designated as open to gender-neutral housing will include double and single bedrooms and will have at least three full bathrooms in the house. One of these bathrooms will be

designated as gender-neutral, one will be designated as a men's restroom, and one will be designated as a women's restroom. The hall will function as any other co-ed hall and same-sex roommate pairs and gender-neutral roommate pairs will be scattered throughout. The West Campus house that is designated as open to gender-neutral housing should not necessarily be limited to a house that has suites with two or more single bedrooms, because under a comprehensive gender-neutral housing program, double bedrooms will be made available to gender-neutral roommate pairs (see section 2.1).

- **The Two Houses Designated for Gender-Neutral Housing Will not be Labeled as “Gender Neutral Houses”:** Houses designated for gender-neutral housing are not meant to permanently be the only houses open to gender-neutral housing. The program is expected to expand to other houses through democratic student action. While the designated gender neutral houses will be the only non-SLG gender-neutral housing options in 2012—the first year of the house model—it is anticipated that gender-neutral housing will be available in many different houses across campus by 2013 through democratic student initiative. Sections 2.3 and 2.4 explain how the program is intended to expand through democratic student action. Because the program is intended to expand outside of the two designated gender-neutral houses after the first year, the houses designated for gender-neutral housing should not be referred to as *the* two “Gender Neutral Houses,” as this gives the false impression that these houses are the *only* houses open to gender-neutral housing. Rather, they should be referred to as houses *open* to gender-neutral housing.

2.3 Houses and SLGs Can Establish Gender-Neutral Housing by a Two-Thirds Majority Vote

SLG's and Houses deserve the right to determine for themselves whether or not allowing gender-neutral roommate pairs is appropriate for their respective communities. Accordingly, under this proposal SLG's and Houses will be able to vote to allow gender-neutral housing in-section by a two-thirds vote of the SLG or House. All SLG's and Houses, regardless of location, reserve this right. Under this proposal, SLG's may vote to allow gender-neutral housing starting in the spring semester of 2012, and members of SLG's who choose to allow gender-neutral housing can begin living in gender-neutral roommate pairs in the fall of 2012. New Houses may vote to allow gender-neutral housing starting in the spring semester of 2013, and members of Houses who choose to allow gender-neutral housing can begin living in gender-neutral roommate pairs in the fall of 2013. After a House or SLG has chosen to allow gender-neutral housing, gender-neutral rooms within that section will be assigned via the normal room picks process. After choosing to allow gender-neutral housing, Houses and SLG's can choose to stop allowing gender-neutral housing, but must also do so by a two-thirds majority. If a House or SLG chooses to stop allowing gender-neutral housing, all students in that House who still want to live in gender-neutral housing reserve the right to move into a House that does allow gender-neutral housing through the normal process for changing Houses.

Furthermore, even if a House does not choose to instate gender-neutral housing during the spring of 2013, they retain the right to establish gender-neutral housing during subsequent spring semesters.

2.4 Houses and SLG's on West Campus Can Unanimously Vote to Establish Gender-Neutral Restrooms

Similarly, SLG's and Houses deserve the right to determine for themselves whether or not creating gender-neutral restrooms is appropriate for their respective communities. Under this proposal, Houses and SLG's will be able to vote to establish one or more of their restrooms as gender-neutral with a unanimous vote. This approach is similar to the process for unlocking bathrooms currently. Requiring a unanimous vote in order to make restrooms gender-neutral adequately protects the rights of those students who are uncomfortable with gender-neutral restrooms. After Houses and SLG's have voted to make restrooms gender-neutral, restroom signs in dorms will be adequately adjusted to reflect this change. Additionally, because houses are given jurisdiction over all of the restrooms in their house, they can choose to make compromises that are beneficial to all students, creating some gender-neutral restrooms while leaving other restrooms as single-gender. For SLG's, choosing to establish gender-neutral restrooms can be a permanent change if an SLG so chooses; however, SLG's can choose to reinstate gendered restrooms with a one-half majority vote. It is okay for SLG's to permanently establish restrooms as gender-neutral because the students who live in an SLG with gender-neutral restrooms have all *chosen* to live in that SLG. For new Houses, gender-neutral restrooms will have to be re-instated annually due to random assignment into houses. After a preferential system of ranking Houses is developed for sophomores, and sophomores have the ability to choose which houses they would like to join, Houses may then choose to adopt gender-neutral restrooms permanently; however, Houses can choose to reinstate gendered restrooms with a one-half majority vote.

2.5 Discouraging Cohabitation Campus-Wide

Gender-neutral housing, and on-campus housing in general, is not intended for students who are romantically involved regardless of their sexual orientation. Accordingly under this policy, a stipulation of the housing contract will be added that discourages students from living with another student with whom they are romantically involved. The current gendered housing policy does not address same-sex romantic cohabitation; in order to be fair and prevent heteronormative assumptions, this should be a stipulation that *all* students must agree to, not simply those who are choosing to live in a gender-neutral housing environment.

2.6 Roommate Reassignment

For students who choose to live in a gender-neutral roommate pair, special

consideration must be taken in dealing with roommate reassignment. The priority for reassigning students who choose to live in gender-neutral housing is to place them in another gender-neutral housing environment if available.

2.7 Adjusting Room Picks Software

In order for gender-neutral housing to be successfully implemented on a larger scale, Room Picks software must be adjusted to allow students of the opposite gender to register for housing together. Under the pilot program this year, Room Picks software didn't allow male and female students to register as roommates which led to many logistical issues that had to be resolved manually by HDRL staff. Revisions of the Room Picks software to allow students of the opposite gender to register for housing together is necessary for a comprehensive gender-neutral housing policy on campus. (To see the Chronicle article on Room Picks software glitches and gender-neutral housing, go to Appendix H)

2.8 Establishing Integrated Co-Ed Halls and Gender-Neutral Restrooms on East Campus

While this proposal is mostly concerned with adapting gender-neutral housing to the proposed House Model on West and Central Campuses, a comprehensive gender-neutral housing policy cannot ignore the importance of the first-year experience on East Campus. While gender-neutral roommate pairs for incoming first-years may be a few years away, there is a lot that can be done to create more gender-neutral environments on East Campus. Currently, East Campus is entirely divided into single-gender halls. While these halls may intersect—as they do in dorms such as Bassett and Pegram—the fundamental gender separation is clear and with it comes an entire set of implicit gender values. These implied gender values contribute to poor gender relations on campus (see sections 1.1 and 1.4).

In order to remedy these problems and create more gender-neutral space for first-year students, it is necessary to establish opt-in co-ed hallways in each dormitory on East Campus. While the size of student demand for co-ed hallways will vary with each dorm, HDRL should accommodate all requests to live on a co-ed hall; this can be done by appropriating a hall, multiple halls, or part of a hall to be co-ed in each freshman dorm. This will require adding a question to the first year housing application that will allow students to indicate that they would like to live on a co-ed hall. It is important to create co-ed hallways within each dorm individually so that first-year students who desire to live in a co-ed environment will have the same ability to live with their fellow FOCUS students and the same opportunity to take advantage of the wellness community in Brown or the artistic community in Pegram.

Additionally, all halls on East Campus will be able to choose to make their restrooms gender-neutral each year through a unanimous vote. This is similar to the current process for unlocking restrooms on each hall. Mandating that the vote be unanimous adequately protects the rights of students who are uncomfortable with gender-neutral restrooms.

Section 3:

Common Concerns

3.1 Parent/Alumni Reactions to Gender-neutral Housing

Perhaps two of the largest concerns that arise with gender-neutral housing are the reactions of parents whose children choose to live in gender-neutral housing and the reactions of Duke alumni who are concerned with the policy. While these reactions are important to take into consideration and while it is important to value the contributions that parents and alumni make to the Duke community, the fear of a negative reaction on the part of alumni or parents should not hinder the progress of gender-neutral housing on campus for two primary reasons.

First, it has been demonstrated by our peer institutions that parents and alumni do *not* react negatively to the expansion of gender-neutral housing. This past year, Yale began offering gender-neutral housing as an option for students (see section 1.5 for further information) and the reaction against the program was non-existent on the part of parents and minimal on the part of alumni. John Meeske, the Associate Dean for Student Organizations and Physical Resources at Yale has been quoted as saying that he has heard “only a handful of complaints” from alumni, and “none from students or parents.” It is reasonable to expect a similar response to the expansion of our current gender-neutral housing program at Duke. This is further reinforced by looking at the reaction of the Duke community to the gender-neutral housing pilot program. Given that a gender-neutral housing pilot program has already been established at Duke, parents and alumni who were truly concerned would have already made their voices heard when the pilot program was established.

Secondly, allowing parent input to intervene in the student-administrative relationship would represent a significant deviation from the norm. Duke has not historically barred students from using their own judgment to determine the course of their Duke career based on the concerns of parents. Parents are not consulted when students choose their major, when students choose to rush a fraternity, SLG, or sorority, when students choose to study abroad, or when students choose their current roommates. Why then should parents be given special permission to influence a student’s ability to choose a roommate of the opposite gender or to use a gender-neutral restroom? While it is important for students to value the input of their parents, it is not the responsibility of the administration to intervene in that relationship. If a student’s parents have a concern about what that student is choosing to pursue at Duke, that concern should stay between the student and their parents. Accordingly, the administration has a limited responsibility to take into account parent approval of gender-neutral housing policies. Furthermore, allowing the potential negative reaction of a few parents and alumni to restrict the broadening of the gender-neutral housing program ignores the many parents and alumni who are in *favor* of expanding the program.

3.2 Public Reactions to Gender-neutral Housing

Another concern that comes with expanding the gender-neutral housing program is that the program will negatively impact Duke's public image. While Duke will certainly have to think carefully about how it will represent this program to the public, Duke has the capacity and the ability to make this program work towards its public advantage. Ultimately, it is likely that a comprehensive gender-neutral housing program will work to ameliorate the University's public image. This can be accomplished through focusing on the many positive aspects of the program—improved gender-relations on campus, increased diversity in housing, a greater consideration for LGBTQ-identified students—and by framing the program as a proactive step to change campus culture and expand options for students. Through focusing press releases, interviews, and public correspondence on the benefits of the program and through emphasizing that the program is not intended for cohabitation, Duke will not only avoid mischaracterization of the program, it will help contribute to expanding the Duke brand as a brand that is inclusive, thoughtful, proactive, and cutting-edge. Additionally, if a comprehensive gender-neutral housing program is adopted, it can be used as a way to demonstrate how Duke exercises leadership in the university sphere on a national scale. When considering gender-neutral housing, it is important to remember that, if characterized properly, a comprehensive gender-neutral housing program will be an asset to the University's image; the expansion of gender-neutral housing is not something that must be done quietly, it is something that can be celebrated publicly.

3.3 Students Concerned with Gender-neutral Housing

Under the current proposal, living in gender-neutral housing—and even living in a section with others who are living in a gender-neutral setting—is something that students must choose to do. The currently proposed gender-neutral housing model is opt-in. Because of the opt-in nature of the program, it is unlikely that students who are not involved will react negatively to it. Additionally, it is important to understand the value of student criticism and concern. A student's decision about their own housing is something that is personal for that student and we must respect individual student agency in these decisions. While it is important to respect the opinions of all students and the way that students feel about the choices of other students within their community, it is also important to acknowledge the limits of that respect. Students who desire gender-neutral housing deserve the right to choose a gender-neutral living environment regardless of whether or not other students, who are not involved in that decision, approve of it. For more information on how students opt-in to the gender-neutral housing program or into a gender-neutral house, see Section 2.

3.4 Cohabitation and couples requesting housing

Under the proposed gender-neutral housing plan, a clause discouraging cohabitation will

become part of the housing agreement for all students, regardless of whether or not they are living in gender-neutral housing. See sections 2.5 for information about discouraging cohabitation. Certainly, it will be possible for students to be dishonest about their relationship with their roommate and ignore the University's discouragement in order to cohabit, but this will represent a minority of students who register for gender-neutral housing. Furthermore, students who choose to cohabit, have a dispute with their roommate, and subsequently seek a new roommate will be able to request reassignment in the same way that any student requests reassignment.

Furthermore, while accounting for the possibility of cohabitation and the potential roommate reassignment that may occur as a result is important, the benefits that gender-neutral housing will provide on campus far outweigh the few extra cases of roommate reassignment that may happen each year. Additionally, it has not historically been the responsibility of the administration to ensure that students choose roommates with whom they are compatible. Students across campus already choose roommate situations that are not ideal and end up having to be reassigned due to these decisions, but the administration does not restrict the ability for students to freely choose their roommates simply because of this potential negative outcome. While it is important for the administration to discourage students from cohabiting, students who choose to live in a gender-neutral environment deserve to be accorded the same ability to choose their roommate freely without administrative inquiry into compatibility.

3.5 Legal Concerns

While North Carolina has technically had a law against cohabitation since 1805, current North Carolina jurisprudence presents no obstacle to establishing comprehensive gender-neutral housing on campus. The North Carolina statute that prohibits cohabitation, General Statute § 14-184, says "If any man and woman, not being married to each other, shall lewdly and lasciviously associate, bed and cohabit together, they shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor." but it was struck down as unconstitutional in February of 2009 by Superior Court Judge Benjamin G. Alford in the case *Debora Lynn Hobbs vs. Pender County Sheriff's Office (2009)*. In the ruling, Judge Alford ruled the law unconstitutional under substantive due process, saying that it violated the precedent established under *Lawrence v. Texas*. Furthermore he issued an injunction against enforcing the law in the state of North Carolina.

Jennifer Rudinger, the current Director of the ACLU of North Carolina and a Duke graduate (Trinity '91) had this to say in respect to the ruling and what implications it has for Duke:

"This is a ruling by a state superior court judge in Pender County. Normally, it would therefore only apply in Pender County. However, because the judge issued an injunction...preventing the state from enforcing this law "in any manner," we believe that it is actually unenforceable by any government entity anywhere in North Carolina. ...Duke is a private university, not a public

institution. Therefore, legally, Duke can ban cohabitation if it wants to, but no police department or government entity could enforce that prohibition... On the flip side, if Duke wants to allow cohabitation, Judge Alford's ruling prohibits any government entity from going after Duke for doing so. The judge said the government is not allowed to enforce the ban on cohabitation because that ban is unconstitutional."

While our current proposal *does* discourage cohabitation, the injunction in *Hobbs v. Pender County* would protect Duke from any sort of legal liability in the case that cohabitation occurred as a result of this policy. In summary, there is no law that prohibits Duke from adopting a comprehensive gender-neutral housing program.

3.6 Roommate Reassignment

Roommate reassignment presents special concerns in the context of gender-neutral housing; however, given the individual nature of the roommate reassignment process currently, adapting reassignment into a gender-neutral framework does not present a daunting task. See section 2.6 for more information.

3.7 Accommodating Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming First Year Students

The policy that is being advocated for under this proposal falls short of fully providing adequately for the needs of transgender and gender non-conforming first-year students because it only allows gender-neutral housing for Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors living on West Campus and Central Campus. While it is important for gender-neutral housing ultimately to expand to East Campus, gender-neutral housing becomes much more complicated where first-year students are concerned. This is not because first-year students are somehow less capable of living successfully in gender-neutral housing; it is because first-year students often do not know their future roommate well before arriving on campus. A much more complex, well thought-out system must be developed in order for gender-neutral housing to work well on East Campus.

In the meantime, this leaves the needs of transgender and gender non-conforming first-year students unmet. While allowing for co-ed halls and gender-neutral restrooms helps to make East Campus more compatible with the needs of transgender and gender non-conforming students, East Campus still will not be completely compatible with those needs. Accordingly, HDRL staff must continue to work hard with individual transgender and gender non-conforming students in order to meet their needs.

3.8 Education About LGBT Issues for HDRL Staff

HDRL staffs have an extremely important role to play in the successful implementation of a comprehensive gender-neutral housing policy. In order to effectively work with LGBT-identified students and to be sensitive to their needs, HDRL staff must be educated about the terminology, history, and concerns of the LGBT community. Currently, the Center for LGBT Life at Duke offers two trainings that relate to these issues: Ally Training and Transgender 101. Both workshops offer invaluable information about the LGBT community and provide attendees with an increased awareness of the unique challenges facing those who identify as LGBT. In order to work effectively with LGBT-identified students—and transgender/gender-nonconforming students in particular—this proposal recommends that HDRL works with the LGBT Center in order to insure that all HDRL staff are properly trained to deal with these issues.

Appendix II:
Gender Non-Specific Housing Proposal for UNC-Chapel
Hill, Terri Phoenix, Ph.D., and Kevin Claybren

Note: This is a draft of the proposal as of October 2011

Gender Non-Specific Housing Proposal for UNC-Chapel Hill
Authored by: Terri Phoenix, Ph.D., and Kevin Claybren

Rationale

Gender non-specific housing goes beyond the traditional rooming of individuals of the same gender and would allow people of any sex, gender or self-identified gender to room together. This would benefit people in many different situations. For example, if two siblings of different genders came to UNC and wanted to room together, the availability of gender non-specific housing would make this possible. Similarly, people who have personal care attendants of a different gender due to a medical situation would benefit from the availability of gender non-specific housing. Additionally, individuals who are lesbian, gay, transgender, intersex and/or gender non-conforming would benefit from this option because it would increase the likelihood of a welcoming and affirming environment due to a greater number of potential roommate options.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and gender non-conforming students endure negative experiences in campus housing. According to “The 2010 State of Higher Education for LGBT People” conducted by Campus Pride and Q Research Institute, “young people who identified as transmasculine, transfeminine, and gender non-conforming experienced the greatest harassment[...] They also reported more negative perception of campus climate” (Rankin, Weber, Blumfeld & Frazer, 2010).

Harassment encompasses a lot of term like: bullying, stalking, hate speech, name calling, racial, religious and sexual harassment. Due to the many intersecting identities in the LGBTQ community, harassment can occur in many different ways. According to *Victims of Sexual Assault and Abuse*, about “81 percent of lesbians or bisexual women reported having been targets of sexual harassment at least once” (Paludi & Denmark, 2010). This disturbing figure is quite common on university campuses across the nation. According to *Transgender Issues on College Campuses*, “Anecdotal and research evidence suggest that transgender people often face verbal and physical assault and risk being questioned or even arrested by the police when they use gender specific facilities” (Beemyn et al., 2005). This demonstrates that LGBTQ and gender non-conforming individuals are at risk under the current rules and regulations on college campuses. Harassment is one of many negative experiences that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and gender non-conforming students deal with while living on college campuses.

The most recent report that examined campus climate and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression demonstrated that harassment is a reality at UNC-CH. Results indicated that LGBTQ respondents were 19 times more likely to report having experienced verbal harassment or fearing for their physical safety than were heterosexual respondents. Transgender, Intersex, or Genderqueer respondents were also more likely to experience verbal harassment (31.8) or fear for their physical safety than were people of other gender identities. When respondents were asked about the location of harassment, 11.8% occurred in residence halls (4th highest location). Of the 34 respondents who reported harassment

in a residence hall, there was a statistically significant difference by sexual orientation (73.5% identified as LGBTQ as compared to 26.5% who identified as heterosexual; $p < .006$).

Isolation is another negative experience that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and gender non-conforming students deal with while living on college campuses. Isolation can be caused by a multitude of reasons ranging from lack of supportive friends, family, faculty at their universities to fear of being ostracized based on sexual orientation. Many students who share a room with a non-LGBTQ supportive roommate feel that they have to keep many aspects of their lives from their roommates. This adds stress and the secrecy can negatively impact the relationship between roommates.

There is clear need and demand for gender non-specific housing at UNC-CH. LGBTQ-identified UNC-CH students, their allies, and the LGBTQ Center have been advocating for the past six years for gender nonspecific housing options. The imperative for gender non-specific housing is amplified now that first year students are required to live on campus.

Gender Non-Specific Housing at UNC-CH Peer Institutions

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill community does not offer gender non-specific housing. Students must have roommates who are the same gender as they are and trans-identified students either live in single occupancy rooms or with a person of the same legal gender.

Nationally, there are 32 public universities and 66 private universities that currently provide gender non-specific housing in some format (Appendix A). Six (6) of UNC-CH's 15 peer institutions have implemented gender non-specific housing policies: University of Pennsylvania, University of California-Berkeley, Duke University, Emory University, Johns Hopkins University, and University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. The University of Southern California has contracted with a private company and that company does provide gender non-specific housing although the university's housing department assigns housing segregated by legal gender. The University of Pennsylvania was the institution that had gender non-specific housing options the longest (began in 2006). Duke University is in its first year with this option.

We analyzed the online information and conducted telephone interviews with these peer institutions to inquire about their policies, procedures and reactions of parents, alumni and administrators to gender non-specific housing. See Appendix B for the responses from these institutions regarding policies and their experiences of implementation of gender nonspecific housing. We tailored our questions to address frequently asked questions that have arisen when gender non-specific housing has been discussed at UNC-CH. The summarized responses to the most commonly arising questions are as follows:

What about people who are uncomfortable with gender nonspecific housing?

All of the institutions had an “opt-in” only policy. This means that no student is required to live in a room, suite, or on a floor with mixed gender housing. Students must specifically request on their housing application form that they desire to live in a gender nonspecific housing arrangement

Who is eligible for gender non-specific housing?

Eligibility varied based on the restrictions that applied to the housing option designated for gender non-specific housing (e.g., at Emory the building eligibility is limited to third and fourth year students) or the requirements of the community or theme program (e.g., Johns Hopkins’ Group Housing program is only available to sophomores and juniors). Institutions that allowed first year students to request gender non-specific housing limited eligibility to those 18 years or older. In the event of someone being under 18, the parents would have to sign a consent form.

What procedures are used for gender nonspecific housing assignments?

Specific procedures used to assign housing varied due to differences in each institution’s housing assignments procedures. What was consistent is that at some point in each institution’s process, students were given the option to indicate that they were requesting gender non-specific housing. Students also had the option to request specific roommates who also were interested in gender non-specific housing. Some institutions required that students obtain adequate number of students (all had to have opted into gender non-specific housing) to fill the suite, room, or apartment.

What were the reactions from public/students/parents?

Every person interviewed said that their institution had prepared in advance for a great deal of negative response from parents, alumni, and other stakeholder but such response never materialized. The questions received were about the specific procedures for assignment (e.g., how can I request this? or Will my student be required to live in gender non-specific housing?). Other questions were regarding policies and procedures (e.g., what if I change my mind? What if we have roommate conflict and want to switch rooms?).

What location & type housing is gender non-specific housing?

The location and type of housing varied. Some institutions had delimited a specific floor, suites, or building as gender non-specific housing. Others (UPenn) allowed gender non-specific housing in 100% of their housing. The various options included:

- Residence hall assignments included:
 - Single or double occupancy rooms with a private bath
 - Single or double occupancy rooms with a gender-neutral bathroom in close proximity
 - Single or double occupancy rooms with attached bathroom shared with another single or double occupancy room
- Apartment assignments may include:
 - One-bedroom apartment with a shared kitchen and private bath
 - Multi-bedroom apartment with a shared kitchen and shared bath

What do they do in the following issues or situations?

- **Heterosexual couple requests shared housing**—some institutions (Johns Hopkins, Duke) require that rooms be occupied by same gender even if suites or apartments are mixed gender. Most had no restrictions based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **Someone cancelling contract**—all institutions utilized the exact same procedures that would have applied for a gender specific housing assignment. Typically, the roommate(s) had the first opportunity to find someone to fill the space. If they could not find someone within a specified period of time, then housing assigned someone from the gender non-specific housing waiting list. Some institutions offered the option for the remaining roommates to “buy out” the space by dividing the additional cost among themselves.
- **Roommate conflict**— all institutions utilized the exact same procedures that would have applied for a gender specific housing assignment. The procedures varied in the specifics but in general followed the following course: (a) attempts at mediation/resolution with the involvement of the Resident Advisor, (b) mediation/resolution with the involvement of a Community Director or other housing representative, (c) submitting a request for room change. The person who requested moving out was not guaranteed another gender non-specific housing assignment even if they requested it. Also, if the person requesting to move out cancelled their housing contract completely (i.e., moved off campus) they had to pay the same fee or prorated amount as any other person who cancelled their housing contract.

Recommendations

The Department of Housing and Residential Education (DHRE) at UNC-CH is a leader in promoting multicultural competency among its staff and residents. Their implementation of educational programming, staff training and development, and support services is a great start. The LGBTQ Center, students who have signed the petition for gender non-specific housing, and many student leaders (see letters of support) recommend the creation of gender non-specific housing option(s) at UNC-CH. This housing policy potentially would alleviate a large proportion of the harassment and isolation that occurs in housing on our campus. Additionally, it would provide greater flexibility and more options for choice among students.

Implementing gender non-specific housing at UNC-CH could be accomplished using the following procedures:

- Update housing application form to include a place where students over 18 years of age could indicate that they prefer assignment in gender non-specific housing. Include on the housing form a place for students to indicate their preference for specific roommate(s). If a person is less than 18 years of age, they parental consent could be an additional requirement to opt into gender non-specific housing (unless the student has independent student status). To begin gender non-specific housing in fall 2012, the application

revision would need to be completed in time to meet the spring housing application deadlines.

- Designate 2 suites (16 housing slots) for people who opt-into gender non-specific housing on their application form. If preliminary research indicates more slots are needed, then set aside an additional number of slots to meet the findings or submitted applications. Alternately, a waiting list could be created for use in the event of a cancellation of contract.
- Match people who opt into gender non-specific housing and who requested each other for purposes of housing assignments. Match people who indicate that they want gender non-specific housing but who have not identified a roommate with other student(s) who also selected gender non-specific housing but who did not identify a roommate.
- Develop policies and procedures for addressing situations that might arise during the year between or among residents. In many cases the policies and procedures for gender non-specific housing would be exactly the same as current policies and procedures for housing assigned based on gender. These procedures should be informed by existing policies/procedures at institutions that already have gender non-specific housing, by existing recommendation in research literature on best practices, and with input from LGBTQ Center staff.

Appendix C details letters of support as well as petitions that were signed during April and May 2011 (we will bring these to the meeting). The petitions asked if respondents supported the existence of gender non-specific housing as well as if they were interested in living in such housing. A total of 883 people indicated their support for gender non-specific housing, of which 277 people indicated they would like to live in gender non-specific housing. One person wrote that they would “be willing to be the RA” and another wrote “As an RA, I know our mission statement supports this. Why isn’t this happening?!!” The LGBTQ Center recommends and students support the creation of gender non-specific housing options by the 2012-2013 academic year. The LGBTQ Center recommends and students support the creation of gender non-specific housing options by the 2012-2013 academic year.